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OF
SAMUEL JOHNSON

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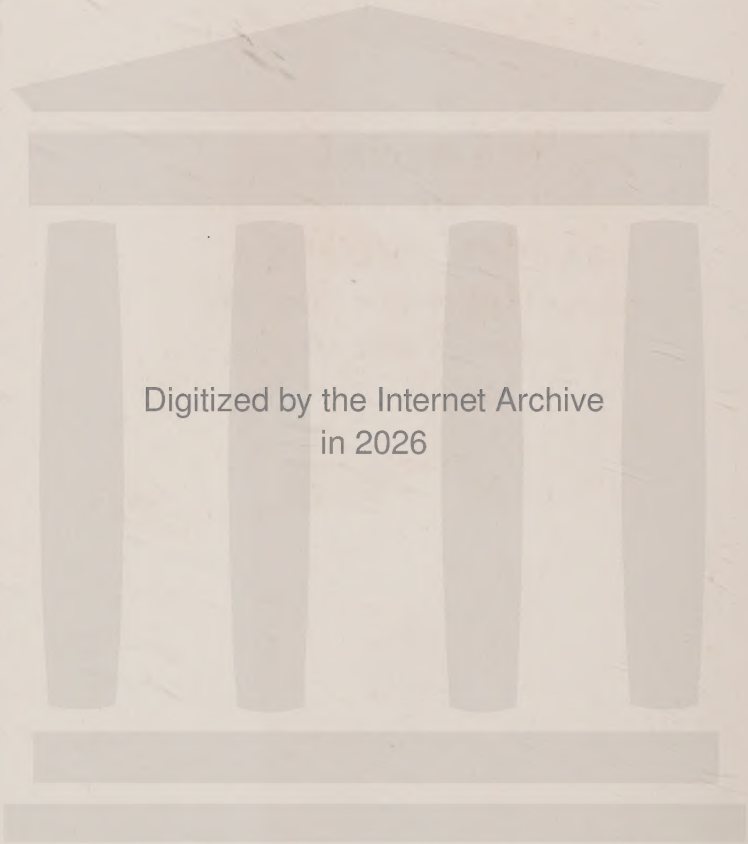
IN SIXTEEN VOLUMES

VOLUME VII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Painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.

GEORGE COLMAN

Works

RASSELAS
PRINCE OF ABISSINIA

By SAMUEL JOHNSON

PAFRAETS BOOK COMPANY
TROY NEW YORK

Of this Literary Club Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson Seven Hundred and Seventy-four Sets have been printed from type on Special Water Marked Paper, of which this Copy is N° 118

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THE HISTORY OF RASSELAS, PRINCE OF ABISSINIA

PREFATORY OBSERVATIONS

THE following incomparable tale was published in 1759; and the early familiarity with eastern manners, which Johnson derived from his translation of father Lobo's travels into Abissinia, may be presumed to have led him to fix his opening scene in that country; while Rassela Christos, the general of sultan Sequed, mentioned in that work, may have suggested the name of his speculative prince. Rasselas was written in the evenings of a single week, and sent to the press, in portions, with the amiable view of defraying the funeral expenses of the author's aged mother, and discharging her few remaining debts. The sum, however, which he received for it, does not seem large, to those who know its subsequent popularity. None of his works has been more widely circulated; and the admiration, which it has attracted, in almost every country of Europe proves, that, with all its depression and sadness, it does utter a voice, that meets with an assenting answer in the hearts of all who have tried life, and found its emptiness. Johnson's view of our lot on earth was always gloomy, and the circumstances, under which Rasselas was composed, were calculated to add a deepened tinge of melancholy to its speculations on human folly, misery, or malignity. Many of the subjects discussed, are known to have been those which had agitated Johnson's mind. Among them is the question, whether the departed

ever revisit the places that knew them on earth, and how far they may take an interest in the welfare of those, over whom they watched, when here. We shall elsewhere have to contemplate the moralist, standing on the border of his mother's grave, and asking, with anxious agony, whether that dark bourn, once passed, terminated for ever the cares of maternity and love[a]. The frivolous and the proud, who think not, or acknowledge not, that there are secrets, in both matter and mind, of which their philosophy has not dreamed, may smile at what they may, in their derision, term such weak and idle inquiries. But on them, the most powerful minds that ever illuminated this world, have fastened, with an intense curiosity; and, owning their fears, or their ignorance, have not dared to disavow their belief[b].

It is not to be denied, that Rasselas displays life, as one unvaried series of disappointments, and leaves the mind, at its close, in painful depression. This effect has been considered an evil, and regarded even as similar to that produced by the doctrines of Voltaire, Bolingbroke, and Rousseau, who combined every thing venerable on earth with ridicule, treated virtue and vice, with equal contemptuous indifference, and laid bare, with cruel mockery, the vanity of all mortal wishes, prospects, and pursuits. Their motive, for all this, we need not pause, in this place,

[a] See Idler, No. 41, and his letter to Mr. Elphinstone, on the death of his mother.

[b] Aristot. Ethic. Nich. lib. i. c. 10, 11. In Barrow's sermon on the being of God, proved from supernatural effects, Aristotle is called "the least credulous or fanciful of men."

to examine. But a distinction may be made between the melancholy of the heart, and the melancholy of the mind: while the latter is sceptical, sour, and misanthropic, the former is passionate, tender, and religious. Those who are under the influence of the one, become inactive, morose, or heedless: detecting the follies of the wisest and the frailties of the best, they scoff at the very name of virtue; they spurn, as visionary and weak, every attempt to meliorate man's condition, and from their conviction of the earthward tendency of his mind, they bound his destinies by this narrow world and its concerns. But those whose hearts are penetrated with a feeling for human infirmity and sorrow, are benevolent and active; considering man, as the victim of sin, and woe, and death, for a cause which reason cannot unfold, but which religion promises to terminate, they sooth the short-lived disappointments of life, by pointing to a loftier and more lasting state. Candide is the book of the one party, Rasselas of the other. They appeared nearly together; they exhibit the same picture of change, and misery, and crime. But the one demoralized a continent, and gave birth to lust, and rapine, and bloodshed; the other has blessed many a heart, and gladdened the vale of sorrow, with many a rill of pure and living water. Voltaire may be likened to the venomous toad of eastern allegory, which extracts a deadly poison from that sunbeam which bears health, and light, and life to all beside: the philosopher, in Rasselas, like some holy and aged man, who has well nigh run his course, in re-

counting the toils and perils of his pilgrimage, may sadden the young heart, and crush the fond hopes of inexperience; but, while he wounds, he presents the antidote and the balm, and tells, where promises will be realized, and hopes will no more be disappointed. We have ventured to detain our readers thus long from Rasselas itself, because, from its similar view of life with the sceptical school, many well-intentioned men have apprehended, its effects might be the same. We have, therefore, attempted briefly to distinguish the sources whence these different writings have issued, and, we trust, we have pointed out their remoteness from each other. And we do not dwell on the subject, at greater length, because Johnson's writings, in various parts, will require our attention on this particular head. To be restless and weary of the dull details and incomplete enjoyments of life, is common to all lofty minds. Frederick of Prussia sought, in the bosom of a cold philosophy, to chill every generous impulse, and each warm aspiration after immortality; but he painfully felt, how inefficient was grandeur, or power, to fill the heart, and plaintively exclaimed to Maupertuis, "Que notre vie est peu de chose;" all is vanity. The philosophy of Rasselas, however, though it pronounces on the unsatisfactory nature of all human enjoyments, and though its perusal may check the worldling in his mirth, and bring down the mighty in his pride, does not, with the philosophic conqueror, sullenly despair, but gently sooths the mourner, by the prospect of a final rec-

ompense and repose. Its pages inculcate the same lesson, as those of the Rambler, but "the precept, which is tedious in a formal essay, may acquire attractions in a tale, and the sober charms of truth be divested of their austerity by the graces of innocent fiction[c]." We may observe, in conclusion, that the abrupt termination of Rasselas, so left, according to sir John Hawkins, by its author, to admit of continuation, and its unbroken gloom, induced Miss E. Cornelia Knight to present to the public a tale, entitled Dinarbas, to exhibit the fairer view of life.

[c] See Drake's Speculator, 1790, No. 1.

THE HISTORY OF RASSELAS, PRINCE OF ABISSINIA

Chapter I

DESCRIPTION OF A PALACE IN A VALLEY

YE, who listen, with credulity, to the whispers of fancy, and pursue, with eagerness, the phantoms of hope; who expect, that age will perform the promises of youth, and that the deficiencies of the present day will be supplied by the morrow; attend to the history of Rasselas, prince of Abissinia.

Rasselas was the fourth son of the mighty emperour, in whose dominions the father of waters begins his course; whose bounty pours down the streams of plenty, and scatters over half the world the harvests of Egypt.

According to the custom, which has descended, from age to age, among the monarchs of the torrid zone, Rasselas was confined in a private palace, with the other sons and daughters of Abissinian royalty, till the order of succession should call him to the throne.

The place, which the wisdom, or policy, of antiquity had destined for the residence of the Abissinian princes, was a spacious valley in the kingdom of Amhara, surrounded, on every side, by mountains, of which the summits overhang the middle part. The only passage, by which it could be entered, was a cavern that passed under a rock, of which it has been long disputed, whether it was the work of nature, or of human industry. The outlet of the cavern was concealed by a thick wood, and the

mouth, which opened into the valley, was closed with gates of iron, forged by the artificers of ancient days, so massy, that no man could, without the help of engines, open or shut them.

From the mountains, on every side, rivulets descended, that filled all the valley with verdure and fertility, and formed a lake in the middle, inhabited by fish of every species, and frequented by every fowl, whom nature has taught to dip the wing in water. This lake discharged its superfluities by a stream, which entered a dark cleft of the mountain, on the northern side, and fell, with dreadful noise, from precipice to precipice, till it was heard no more.

The sides of the mountains were covered with trees; the banks of the brooks were diversified with flowers; every blast shook spices from the rocks; and every month dropped fruits upon the ground. All animals that bite the grass, or browse the shrub, whether wild or tame, wandered in this extensive circuit, secured from beasts of prey, by the mountains which confined them. On one part, were flocks and herds feeding in the pastures; on another, all the beasts of chase frisking in the lawns; the sprightly kid was bounding on the rocks, the subtle monkey frolicking in the trees, and the solemn elephant reposing in the shade. All the diversities of the world were brought together, the blessings of nature were collected, and its evils extracted and excluded.

The valley, wide and fruitful, supplied its inhabitants with the necessaries of life; and all delights

and superfluities were added, at the annual visit which the emperour paid his children, when the iron gate was opened to the sound of musick; and during eight days every one, that resided in the valley, was required to propose whatever might contribute to make seclusion pleasant, to fill up the vacancies of attention, and lessen the tediousness of time. Every desire was immediately granted. All the artificers of pleasure were called to gladden the festivity; the musicians exerted the power of harmony, and the dancers showed their activity before the princes, in hope that they should pass their lives in this blissful captivity, to which those only were admitted, whose performance was thought able to add novelty to luxury. Such was the appearance of security and delight, which this retirement afforded, that they, to whom it was new, always desired, that it might be perpetual; and, as those, on whom the iron gate had once closed, were never suffered to return, the effect of long experience could not be known. Thus every year produced new schemes of delight, and new competitors for imprisonment.

The palace stood on an eminence, raised about thirty paces above the surface of the lake. It was divided into many squares or courts, built with greater or less magnificence, according to the rank of those for whom they were designed. The roofs were turned into arches of massy stone, joined by a cement that grew harder by time, and the building stood, from century to century, deriding the solstitial rains and equinoctial hurricanes, without need of reparation.

This house, which was so large, as to be fully known to none, but some ancient officers, who successively inherited the secrets of the place, was built, as if suspicion herself had dictated the plan. To every room there was an open and secret passage, every square had a communication with the rest, either from the upper stories, by private galleries, or by subterranean passages, from the lower apartments. Many of the columns had unsuspected cavities, in which a long race of monarchs had reposited their treasures. They then closed up the opening with marble, which was never to be removed, but in the utmost exigencies of the kingdom; and recorded their accumulations in a book, which was itself concealed in a tower not entered, but by the emperour, attended by the prince, who stood next in succession.

Chapter II

THE DISCONTENT OF RASSELAS IN THE HAPPY VALLEY

HERE the sons and daughters of Abissinia, lived only to know the soft vicissitudes of pleasure and repose, attended by all that were skilful to delight, and gratified with whatever the senses can enjoy. They wandered in gardens of fragrance, and slept in the fortresses of security. Every art was practised, to make them pleased with their own condition. The sages, who instructed them, told them of nothing but the miseries of publick life, and described all beyond the mountains, as regions of

calamity, where discord was always raging, and where man preyed upon man.

To heighten their opinion of their own felicity, they were daily entertained with songs, the subject of which was the happy valley. Their appetites were excited, by frequent enumerations of different enjoyments, and revelry and merriment was the business of every hour, from the dawn of morning, to the close of even.

These methods were, generally, successful; few of the princes had ever wished to enlarge their bounds, but passed their lives in full conviction, that they had all within their reach that art or nature could bestow, and pitied those, whom fate had excluded from this seat of tranquillity, as the sport of chance, and the slaves of misery.

Thus, they rose in the morning, and lay down at night, pleased with each other and with themselves, all but Rasselas, who, in the twenty-sixth year of his age, began to withdraw himself from their pastimes and assemblies, and to delight in solitary walks, and silent meditation. He often sat before tables, covered with luxury, and forgot to taste the dainties that were placed before him: he rose abruptly in the midst of the song, and hastily retired beyond the sound of musick. His attendants observed the change, and endeavoured to renew his love of pleasure: he neglected their officiousness, repulsed their invitations, and spent day after day, on the banks of rivulets, sheltered with trees; where he sometimes listened to the birds in the branches, sometimes ob-

served the fish playing in the stream, and anon cast his eyes upon the pastures and mountains filled with animals, of which some were biting the herbage, and some sleeping among the bushes.

This singularity of his humour made him much observed. One of the sages, in whose conversation he had formerly delighted, followed him secretly, in hope of discovering the cause of his disquiet. Rasselas, who knew not that any one was near him, having, for some time, fixed his eyes upon the goats that were browsing among the rocks, began to compare their condition with his own.

"What," said he, "makes the difference between man and all the rest of the animal creation? Every beast, that strays beside me, has the same corporal necessities with myself: he is hungry, and crops the grass, he is thirsty and drinks the stream, his thirst and hunger are appeased, he is satisfied and sleeps: he rises again and is hungry, he is again fed, and is at rest. I am hungry and thirsty, like him, but when thirst and hunger cease, I am not at rest; I am, like him, pained with want, but am not, like him, satisfied with fulness. The intermediate hours are tedious and gloomy; I long again to be hungry, that I may again quicken my attention. The birds peck the berries, or the corn, and fly away to the groves, where they sit, in seeming happiness, on the branches, and waste their lives in tuning one unvaried series of sounds. I, likewise, can call the lutanist and the singer, but the sounds, that pleased me yesterday, weary me to-day, and will grow yet more weari-

some to-morrow. I can discover within me no power of perception, which is not glutted with its proper pleasure, yet I do not feel myself delighted. Man surely has some latent sense, for which this place affords no gratification; or he has some desires, distinct from sense, which must be satisfied, before he can be happy."

After this, he lifted up his head, and seeing the moon rising, walked toward the palace. As he passed through the fields, and saw the animals around him, "Ye," said he, "are happy, and need not envy me, that walk thus among you, burdened with myself; nor do I, ye gentle beings, envy your felicity; for it is not the felicity of man. I have many distresses, from which ye are free; I fear pain, when I do not feel it; I sometimes shrink at evils recollected, and sometimes start at evils anticipated: surely the equity of providence has balanced peculiar sufferings with peculiar enjoyments."

With observations like these, the prince amused himself, as he returned, uttering them with a plaintive voice, yet with a look, that discovered him to feel some complacence in his own perspicacity, and to receive some solace of the miseries of life, from consciousness of the delicacy with which he felt, and the eloquence with which he bewailed them. He mingled, cheerfully, in the diversions of the evening, and all rejoiced to find, that his heart was lightened.

Chapter III

THE WANTS OF HIM THAT WANTS NOTHING

ON the next day, his old instructer, imagining that he had now made himself acquainted with his disease of mind, was in hope of curing it by counsel, and officiously sought an opportunity of conference, which the prince, having long considered him, as one whose intellects were exhausted, was not very willing to afford: "Why," said he, "does this man thus obtrude upon me? shall I be never suffered to forget those lectures, which pleased, only while they were new, and to become new again, must be forgotten?" He then walked into the wood, and composed himself to his usual meditations, when, before his thoughts had taken any settled form, he perceived his pursuer at his side, and was, at first, prompted, by his impatience, to go hastily away; but, being unwilling to offend a man, whom he had once reverenced, and still loved, he invited him to sit down with him on the bank.

The old man, thus encouraged, began to lament the change, which had been lately observed in the prince, and to inquire, why he so often retired from the pleasures of the palace, to loneliness and silence. "I fly from pleasure," said the prince, "because pleasure has ceased to please; I am lonely, because I am miserable, and am unwilling to cloud, with my presence, the happiness of others." "You, sir," said the sage, "are the first who has complained of misery in the happy valley. I hope to convince you,

that your complaints have no real cause. You are here in full possession of all that the emperour of Abissinia can bestow; here is neither labour to be endured, nor danger to be dreaded, yet here is all that labour or danger can procure or purchase. Look round, and tell me which of your wants is without supply: if you want nothing, how are you unhappy?''

''That I want nothing,'' said the prince, ''or that I know not what I want, is the cause of my complaint; if I had any known want, I should have a certain wish; that wish would excite endeavour, and I should not then repine to see the sun move so slowly towards the western mountain, or lament when the day breaks, and sleep will no longer hide me from myself. When I see the kids and the lambs chasing one another, I fancy, that I should be happy, if I had something to pursue. But, possessing all that I can want, I find one day and one hour exactly like another, except that the latter is still more tedious than the former. Let your experience inform me, how the day may now seem as short as in my childhood, while nature was yet fresh, and every moment showed me what I never had observed before. I have already enjoyed too much; give me something to desire.''

The old man was surprised at this new species of affliction, and knew not what to reply, yet was unwilling to be silent. ''Sir,'' said he, ''if you had seen the miseries of the world, you would know how to value your present state.'' ''Now,'' said the

prince, "you have given me something to desire; I shall long to see the miseries of the world, since the sight of them is necessary to happiness."

Chapter IV

THE PRINCE CONTINUES TO GRIEVE AND MUSE

AT this time the sound of musick proclaimed the hour of repast, and the conversation was concluded. The old man went away, sufficiently discontented, to find that his reasonings had produced the only conclusion which they were intended to prevent. But, in the decline of life, shame and grief are of short duration; whether it be, that we bear easily what we have borne long, or that, finding ourselves in age less regarded, we less regard others; or that we look with slight regard upon afflictions, to which we know that the hand of death is about to put an end.

The prince, whose views were extended to a wider space, could not speedily quiet his emotions. He had been before terrified at the length of life which nature promised him, because he considered, that in a long time much must be endured; he now rejoiced in his youth, because in many years much might be done.

This first beam of hope, that had been ever darted into his mind, rekindled youth in his cheeks, and doubled the lustre of his eyes. He was fired with the desire of doing something, though he knew not yet, with distinctness, either end or means.

He was now no longer gloomy and unsocial; but, considering himself as master of a secret stock of happiness, which he could enjoy only by concealing it, he affected to be busy in all schemes of diversion, and endeavoured to make others pleased with the state, of which he himself was weary. But pleasures never can be so multiplied or continued, as not to leave much of life unemployed; there were many hours, both of the night and day, which he could spend, without suspicion, in solitary thought. The load of life was much lightened: he went eagerly into the assemblies, because he supposed the frequency of his presence necessary to the success of his purposes; he retired gladly to privacy, because he had now a subject of thought.

His chief amusement was to picture to himself that world which he had never seen; to place himself in various conditions; to be entangled in imaginary difficulties, and to be engaged in wild adventures: but his benevolence always terminated his projects in the relief of distress, the detection of fraud, the defeat of oppression, and the diffusion of happiness.

Thus passed twenty months of the life of Rasselas. He busied himself so intensely in visionary bustle, that he forgot his real solitude, and, amidst hourly preparations for the various incidents of human affairs, neglected to consider, by what means he should mingle with mankind.

One day, as he was sitting on a bank, he feigned to himself an orphan virgin, robbed of her little

portion by a treacherous lover, and crying after him, for restitution and redress. So strongly was the image impressed upon his mind, that he started up in the maid's defence, and ran forward to seize the plunderer, with all the eagerness of real pursuit. Fear naturally quickens the flight of guilt: Rasselas could not catch the fugitive with his utmost efforts; but, resolving to weary, by perseverance, him whom he could not surpass in speed, he pressed on till the foot of the mountain stopped his course.

Here he recollected himself, and smiled at his own useless impetuosity. Then, raising his eyes to the mountain, "This," said he, "is the fatal obstacle that hinders, at once, the enjoyment of pleasure, and the exercise of virtue. How long is it that my hopes and wishes have flown beyond this boundary of my life, which, yet, I never have attempted to surmount!"

Struck with this reflection, he sat down to muse; and remembered, that, since he first resolved to escape from his confinement, the sun had passed twice over him in his annual course. He now felt a degree of regret, with which he had never been before acquainted. He considered, how much might have been done in the time which had passed, and left nothing real behind it. He compared twenty months with the life of man. "In life," said he, "is not to be counted the ignorance of infancy, or imbecility of age. We are long, before we are able to think, and we soon cease from the power of acting. The true period of human existence may be reason-

ably estimated at forty years, of which I have mused away the four and twentieth part. What I have lost was certain, for I have certainly possessed it; but of twenty months to come, who can assure me ?''

The consciousness of his own folly pierced him deeply, and he was long before he could be reconciled to himself. ''The rest of my time,'' said he, ''has been lost, by the crime or folly of my ancestors, and the absurd institutions of my country; I remember it with disgust, yet without remorse: but the months that have passed, since new light darted into my soul, since I formed a scheme of reasonable fecility, have been squandered by my own fault. I have lost that which can never be restored: I have seen the sun rise and set for twenty months, an idle gazer on the light of heaven: in this time, the birds have left the nest of their mother, and committed themselves to the woods and to the skies: the kid has forsaken the teat, and learned, by degrees, to climb the rocks, in quest of independent sustenance. I only have made no advances, but am still helpless and ignorant. The moon, by more than twenty changes, admonished me of the flux of life; the stream, that rolled before my feet, upbraided my inactivity. I sat feasting on intellectual luxury, regardless alike of the examples of the earth, and the instructions of the planets. Twenty months are passed; who shall restore them.''

These sorrowful meditations fastened upon his mind; he passed four months, in resolving to lose no more time in idle resolves, and was awakened to

more vigorous exertion, by hearing a maid, who had broken a porcelain cup, remark, that what cannot be repaired is not to be regretted.

This was obvious; and Rasselas reproached himself, that he had not discovered it, having not known, or not considered, how many useful hints are obtained by chance, and how often the mind, hurried by her own ardour to distant views, neglects the truths that lie open before her. He, for a few hours, regretted his regret, and from that time bent his whole mind upon the means of escaping from the valley of happiness.

Chapter V

THE PRINCE MEDITATES HIS ESCAPE

HE now found, that it would be very difficult to effect that which it was very easy to suppose effected. When he looked round about him, he saw himself confined by the bars of nature, which had never yet been broken, and by the gate, through which none, that once had passed it, were ever able to return. He was now impatient as an eagle in a grate. He passed week after week in clambering the mountains, to see if there was any aperture which the bushes might conceal, but found all the summits inaccessible by their prominence. The iron gate he despaired to open; for it was not only secured with all the power of art, but was always watched by successive sentinels, and was, by its position, exposed to the perpetual observation of all the inhabitants.

He then examined the cavern through which the waters of the lake were discharged; and, looking down, at a time when the sun shown strongly upon its mouth, he discovered it to be full of broken rocks, which, though they permitted the stream to flow through many narrow passages, would stop any body of solid bulk. He returned discouraged and dejected; but, having now known the blessing of hope, resolved never to despair.

In these fruitless searches he spent ten months. The time, however, passed cheerfully away: in the morning he rose with new hope, in the evening applauded his own diligence, and in the night slept sound after his fatigue. He met a thousand amusements, which beguiled his labour, and diversified his thoughts. He discerned the various instincts of animals, and properties of plants, and found the place replete with wonders, of which he purposed to solace himself with the contemplation, if he should never be able to accomplish his flight; rejoicing that his endeavours, though yet unsuccessful, had supplied him with a source of inexhaustible inquiry.

But his original curiosity was not yet abated; he resolved to obtain some knowledge of the ways of men. His wish still continued, but his hope grew less. He ceased to survey any longer the walls of his prison, and spared to search, by new toils, for interstices which he knew could not be found; yet determined to keep his design always in view, and lay hold on any expedient that time should offer.

Chapter VI

A DISSERTATION ON THE ART OF FLYING

AMONG the artists that had been allured into the happy valley, to labour for the accommodation and pleasure of its inhabitants, was a man eminent for his knowledge of the mechanick powers, who had contrived many engines, both of use and recreation. By a wheel, which the steam turned, he forced the water into a tower, whence it was distributed to all the apartments of the palace. He erected a pavilion in the garden, around which he kept the air always cool by artificial showers. One of the groves, appropriated to the ladies, was ventilated by fans, to which the rivulet, that ran through it, gave a constant motion; and instruments of soft musick were placed at proper distances, of which some played by the impulse of the wind, and some by the power of the stream.

This artist was, sometimes, visited by Rasselas, who was pleased with every kind of knowledge, imagining that the time would come, when all his acquisitions should be of use to him in the open world. He came one day to amuse himself in his usual manner, and found the master busy in building a sailing chariot: he saw that the design was practicable upon a level surface, and, with expressions of great esteem, solicited its completion. The workman was pleased to find himself so much regarded by the prince, and resolved to gain yet higher honours. "Sir," said he, "you have seen but a small

part of what the mechanick sciences can perform. I have been long of opinion, that instead of the tardy conveyance of ships and chariots, man might use the swifter migration of wings; that the fields of air are open to knowledge, and that only ignorance and idleness need crawl upon the ground."

This hint rekindled the prince's desire of passing the mountains: having seen what the mechanist had already performed, he was willing to fancy that he could do more; yet resolved to inquire further, before he suffered hope to afflict him by disappointment. "I am afraid," said he to the artist, "that your imagination prevails over your skill, and that you now tell me rather what you wish, than what you know. Every animal has his element assigned him: the birds have the air, and man and beasts the earth." — "So," replied the mechanist, "fishes have the water, in which, yet, beasts can swim by nature, and men by art. He that can swim needs not despair to fly: to swim is to fly in a grosser fluid, and to fly is to swim in a subtler. We are only to proportion our power of resistance to the different density of matter through which we are to pass. You will be, necessarily, upborne by the air, if you can renew any impulse upon it, faster than the air can recede from the pressure."

"But the exercise of swimming," said the prince, "is very laborious; the strongest limbs are soon wearied; I am afraid, the act of flying will be yet more violent, and wings will be of no great use, unless we can fly further than we can swim."

"The labour of rising from the ground," said the artist, "will be great, as we see it in the heavier domestick fowls; but as we mount higher, the earth's attraction, and the body's gravity, will be gradually diminished, till we shall arrive at a region, where the man will float in the air without any tendency to fall; no care will then be necessary but to move forwards, which the gentlest impulse will effect. You, sir, whose curiosity is so extensive, will easily conceive with what pleasure a philosopher, furnished with wings, and hovering in the sky, would see the earth, and all its inhabitants, rolling beneath him, and presenting to him, successively, by its diurnal motion, all the countries within the same parallel. How must it amuse the pendent spectator to see the moving scene of land and ocean, cities and deserts! To survey, with equal security, the marts of trade, and the fields of battle; mountains infested by barbarians, and fruitful regions gladdened by plenty, and lulled by peace! How easily shall we then trace the Nile through all its passage; pass over to distant regions, and examine the face of nature, from one extremity of the earth to the other!"

"All this," said the prince, "is much to be desired; but I am afraid, that no man will be able to breathe in these regions of speculation and tranquillity. I have been told, that respiration is difficult upon lofty mountains, yet, from these precipices, though so high as to produce great tenuity of air, it is very easy to fall; therefore, I suspect, that from

any height, where life can be supported, there may be danger of too quick descent."

"Nothing," replied the artist, "will ever be attempted, if all possible objections must be first overcome. If you will favour my project, I will try the first flight at my own hazard. I have considered the structure of all volant animals, and find the folding continuity of the bat's wings most easily accommodated to the human form. Upon this model, I shall begin my task to-morrow, and in a year, expect to tower into the air beyond the malice and pursuit of man. But I will work only on this condition, that the art shall not be divulged, and that you shall not require me to make wings for any but ourselves."

"Why," said Rasselas, "should you envy others so great an advantage? All skill ought to be exerted for universal good; every man has owed much to others, and ought to repay the kindness that he has received."

"If men were all virtuous," returned the artist, "I should, with great alacrity, teach them all to fly. But what would be the security of the good, if the bad could, at pleasure, invade them from the sky? Against an army sailing through the clouds, neither walls, nor mountains, nor seas, could afford any security. A flight of northern savages might hover in the wind, and light, at once, with irresistible violence, upon the capital of a fruitful region, that was rolling under them. Even this valley, the retreat of princes, the abode of happiness, might be violated

by the sudden descent of some of the naked nations, that swarm on the coast of the southern sea.''

The prince promised secrecy, and waited for the performance, not wholly hopeless of success. He visited the work, from time to time, observed its progress, and remarked many ingenious contrivances, to facilitate motion, and unite levity with strength. The artist was every day more certain, that he should leave vultures and eagles behind him, and the contagion of his confidence seized upon the prince.

In a year the wings were finished, and, on a morning appointed, the maker appeared, furnished for flight, on a little promontory: he waived his pinions awhile, to gather air, then leaped from his stand, and, in an instant, dropped into the lake. His wings, which were of no use in the air, sustained him in the water, and the prince drew him to land, half dead with terrour and vexation.[d]

Chapter VII

THE PRINCE FINDS A MAN OF LEARNING

THE prince was not much afflicted by this disaster, having suffered himself to hope for a happier event, only because he had no other means of escape in view. He still persisted in his design to leave the happy valley by the first opportunity.

His imagination was now at a stand; he had no prospect of entering into the world; and, notwith-

[d] See Rambler, No. 199, and note.

standing all his endeavours to support himself, discontent, by degrees, preyed upon him, and he began again to lose his thoughts in sadness, when the rainy season, which, in these countries, is periodical, made it inconvenient to wander in the woods.

The rain continued longer, and with more violence, than had been ever known: the clouds broke on the surrounding mountains, and the torrents streamed into the plain on every side, till the cavern was too narrow to discharge the water. The lake overflowed its banks, and all the level of the valley was covered with the inundation. The eminence, on which the palace was built, and some other spots of rising ground, were all that the eye could now discover. The herds and flocks left the pastures, and both the wild beasts and the tame retreated to the mountains.

This inundation confined all the princes to domestick amusements, and the attention of Rasselas was particularly seized by a poem, which Imlac rehearsed, upon the various conditions of humanity. He commanded the poet to attend him in his apartment, and recite his verses a second time; then entering into familiar talk, he thought himself happy in having found a man who knew the world so well, and could so skilfully paint the scenes of life. He asked a thousand questions about things, to which, though common to all other mortals, his confinement, from childhood, had kept him a stranger. The poet pitied his ignorance, and loved his curiosity, and entertained him, from day to day, with novelty and in-

struction, so that the prince regretted the necessity of sleep, and longed till the morning should renew his pleasure.

As they were sitting together, the prince commanded Imlac to relate his history, and to tell by what accident he was forced, or by what motive induced, to close his life in the happy valley. As he was going to begin his narrative, Rasselas was called to a concert, and obliged to restrain his curiosity till the evening.

Chapter VIII

THE HISTORY OF IMLAC

THE close of the day is, in the regions of the torrid zone, the only season of diversion and entertainment, and it was, therefore, midnight before the musick ceased, and the princesses retired. Rasselas then called for his companion, and required him to begin the story of his life.

"Sir," said Imlac, "my history will not be long; the life, that is devoted to knowledge, passes silently away, and is very little diversified by events. To talk in publick, to think in solitude, to read and hear, to inquire, and answer inquiries, is the business of a scholar. He wanders about the world without pomp or terrour, and is neither known nor valued but by men like himself.

"I was born in the kingdom of Goiama, at no great distance from the fountain of the Nile. My father was a wealthy merchant, who traded between the inland countries of Africk and the ports of the

Red sea. He was honest, frugal, and diligent, but of mean sentiments, and narrow comprehension; he desired only to be rich, and to conceal his riches, lest he should be spoiled by the governours of the province."

"Surely," said the prince, "my father must be negligent of his charge, if any man, in his dominions, dares take that which belongs to another. Does he not know, that kings are accountable for injustice permitted, as well as done? If I were emperour, not the meanest of my subjects should be oppressed with impunity. My blood boils, when I am told that a merchant durst not enjoy his honest gains, for fear of losing them by the rapacity of power. Name the governour, who robbed the people, that I may declare his crimes to the emperour."

"Sir," said Imlac, "your ardour is the natural effect of virtue animated by youth: the time will come, when you will acquit your father, and, perhaps, hear with less impatience of the governour. Oppression is, in the Abissinian dominions, neither frequent nor tolerated; but no form of government has been yet discovered, by which cruelty can be wholly prevented. Subordination supposes power on one part, and subjection on the other; and if power be in the hands of men, it will, sometimes, be abused. The vigilance of the supreme magistrate may do much, but much will still remain undone. He can never know all the crimes that are committed, and can seldom punish all that he knows."

"This," said the prince, "I do not understand,

but I had rather hear thee than dispute. Continue thy narration."

"My father," proceeded Imlac, "originally intended that I should have no other education, than such as might qualify me for commerce; and, discovering in me great strength of memory, and quickness of apprehension, often declared his hope, that I should be, some time, the richest man in Abissinia."

"Why," said the prince, "did thy father desire the increase of his wealth, when it was already greater than he durst discover or enjoy? I am unwilling to doubt thy veracity, yet inconsistencies cannot both be true."

"Inconsistencies," answered Imlac, "cannot both be right, but, imputed to man, they may both be true. Yet diversity is not inconsistency. My father might expect a time of greater security. However, some desire is necessary to keep life in motion, and he, whose real wants are supplied, must admit those of fancy."

"This," said the prince, "I can, in some measure, conceive. I repent that I interrupted thee."

"With this hope," proceeded Imlac, "he sent me to school; but when I had once found the delight of knowledge, and felt the pleasure of intelligence and the pride of invention, I began, silently, to despise riches, and determined to disappoint the purpose of my father, whose grossness of conception raised my pity. I was twenty years old before his tenderness would expose me to the fatigue of travel, in which time I had been instructed, by successive

masters, in all the literature of my native country. As every hour taught me something new, I lived in a continual course of gratifications; but, as I advanced towards manhood, I lost much of the reverence with which I had been used to look on my instructers; because, when the lesson was ended, I did not find them wiser or better than common men.

"At length my father resolved to initiate me in commerce, and, opening one of his subterranean treasuries, counted out ten thousand pieces of gold. This, young man, said he, is the stock with which you must negotiate. I began with less than the fifth part, and you see how diligence and parsimony have increased it. This is your own, to waste or to improve. If you squander it by negligence or caprice, you must wait for my death, before you will be rich: if, in four years, you double your stock, we will thenceforward let subordination cease, and live together as friends and partners; for he shall always be equal with me, who is equally skilled in the art of growing rich.

"We laid our money upon camels, concealed in bales of cheap goods, and travelled to the shore of the Red sea. When I cast my eye on the expanse of waters, my heart bounded like that of a prisoner escaped. I felt an unextinguishable curiosity kindle in my mind, and resolved to snatch this opportunity of seeing the manners of other nations, and of learning sciences unknown in Abissinia.

"I remembered that my father had obliged me

to the improvement of my stock, not by a promise, which I ought not to violate, but by a penalty, which I was at liberty to incur; and, therefore, determined to gratify my predominant desire, and, by drinking at the fountains of knowledge, to quench the thirst of curiosity.

"As I was supposed to trade without connexion with my father, it was easy for me to become acquainted with the master of a ship, and procure a passage to some other country. I had no motives of choice to regulate my voyage; it was sufficient for me, that, wherever I wandered, I should see a country, which I had not seen before. I, therefore, entered a ship bound for Surat, having left a letter for my father, declaring my intention.

Chapter IX

THE HISTORY OF IMLAC CONTINUED

"WHEN I first entered upon the world of waters, and lost sight of land, I looked round about me with pleasing terrour, and, thinking my soul enlarged by the boundless prospect, imagined that I could gaze round for ever without satiety; but, in a short time, I grew weary of looking on barren uniformity, where I could only see again what I had already seen. I then descended into the ship, and doubted, for awhile, whether all my future pleasures would not end like this, in disgust and disappointment. Yet, surely, said I, the ocean and the land are very different; the only va-

riety of water is rest and motion, but the earth has mountains and valleys, deserts and cities; it is inhabited by men of different customs and contrary opinions; and I may hope to find variety in life, though I should miss it in nature.

"With this thought I quieted my mind, and amused myself during the voyage, sometimes by learning from the sailors the art of navigation, which I have never practised, and sometimes by forming schemes for my conduct in different situations, in not one of which I have been ever placed.

"I was almost weary of my naval amusements, when we landed safely at Surat. I secured my money, and, purchasing some commodities for show joined myself to a caravan that was passing into the inland country. My companions, for some reason or other, conjecturing that I was rich, and, by my inquiries and admiration, finding that I was ignorant, considered me as a novice, whom they had a right to cheat, and who was to learn, at the usual expense, the art of fraud. They exposed me to the theft of servants, and the exaction of officers, and saw me plundered, upon false pretences, without any advantage to themselves, but that of rejoicing in the superiority of their own knowledge."

"Stop a moment," said the prince. "Is there such depravity in man, as that he should injure another, without benefit to himself? I can easily conceive, that all are pleased with superiority: but your ignorance was merely accidental, which, being neither your crime nor your folly, could afford them

no reason to applaud themselves; and the knowledge which they had, and which you wanted, they might as effectually have shown by warning, as betraying you."

"Pride," said Imlac, "is seldom delicate; it will please itself with very mean advantages; and envy feels not its own happiness, but when it may be compared with the misery of others. They were my enemies, because they grieved to think me rich; and my oppressors, because they delighted to find me weak."

"Proceed," said the prince: "I do not doubt of the facts which you relate, but imagine that you impute them to mistaken motives."

"In this company," said Imlac, "I arrived at Agra, the capital of Indostan, the city in which the great mogul commonly resides. I applied myself to the language of the country, and, in a few months, was able to converse with the learned men; some of whom I found morose and reserved, and others easy and communicative; some were unwilling to teach another what they had, with difficulty, learned themselves; and some showed, that the end of their studies was to gain the dignity of instructing.

"To the tutor of the young princes I recommended myself so much, that I was presented to the emperour as a man of uncommon knowledge. The emperour asked me many questions concerning my country and my travels; and though I cannot now recollect any thing that he uttered above the power of a common man, he dismissed me

astonished at his wisdom, and enamoured of his goodness.

"My credit was now so high, that the merchants, with whom I had travelled, applied to me for recommendations to the ladies of the court. I was surprised at their confidence of solicitation, and gently reproached them with their practices on the road. They heard me with cold indifference, and showed no tokens of shame or sorrow.

"They then urged their request with the offer of a bribe; but what I would not do for kindness, I would not do for money; and refused them, not because they had injured me, but because I would not enable them to injure others; for I knew they would have made use of my credit to cheat those who should buy their wares.

"Having resided at Agra till there was no more to be learned, I travelled into Persia, where I saw many remains of ancient magnificence, and observed many new accommodations of life. The Persians are a nation eminently social, and their assemblies afforded me daily opportunities of remarking characters and manners, and of tracing human nature through all its variations.

"From Persia I passed into Arabia, where I saw a nation at once pastoral and warlike; who live without any settled habitation; whose only wealth is their flocks and herds; and who have yet carried on, through all ages, an hereditary war with all mankind, though they neither covet nor envy their possessions."

Chapter X

IMLAC'S HISTORY CONTINUED. A DISSERTATION UPON POETRY

"WHEREVER I went, I found that poetry was considered as the highest learning, and regarded with a veneration, somewhat approaching to that which man would pay to the angelick nature. And yet it fills me with wonder, that, in almost all countries, the most ancient poets are considered as the best: whether it be that every other kind of knowledge is an acquisition gradually attained, and poetry is a gift conferred at once; or that the first poetry of every nation surprised them as a novelty, and retained the credit by consent, which it received by accident at first: or whether, as the province of poetry is to describe nature and passion, which are always the same, the first writers took possession of the most striking objects for description, and the most probable occurrences for fiction, and left nothing to those that followed them, but transcription of the same events, and new combinations of the same images. Whatever be the reason, it is commonly observed, that the early writers are in possession of nature, and their followers of art: that the first excel in strength and invention, and the latter in elegance and refinement.

"I was desirous to add my name to this illustrious fraternity. I read all the poets of Persia and Arabia, and was able to repeat, by memory, the volumes that are suspended in the mosque of Mecca.

But I soon found, that no man was ever great by imitation. My desire of excellence impelled me to transfer my attention to nature and to life. Nature was to be my subject, and men to be my auditors: I could never describe what I had not seen; I could not hope to move those with delight or terrour, whose interest and opinions I did not understand.

"Being now resolved to be a poet, I saw every thing with a new purpose; my sphere of attention was suddenly magnified: no kind of knowledge was to be overlooked. I ranged mountains and deserts for images and resemblances, and pictured upon my mind every tree of the forest and flower of the valley. I observed, with equal care, the crags of the rock and the pinnacles of the palace. Sometimes I wandered along the mazes of the rivulet, and sometimes watched the changes of the summer clouds. To a poet, nothing can be useless. Whatever is beautiful, and whatever is dreadful, must be familiar to his imagination: he must be conversant with all that is awfully vast, or elegantly little. The plants of the garden, the animals of the wood, the minerals of the earth, and meteors of the sky, must all concur to store his mind with inexhaustible variety; for every idea is useful for the enforcement or decoration of moral or religious truth; and he, who knows most, will have most power of diversifying his scenes, and of gratifying his reader with remote allusions and unexpected instruction.

"All the appearances of nature I was, therefore, careful to study, and every country, which I have

surveyed, has contributed something to my poetical powers."

"In so wide a survey," said the prince, "you must surely have left much unobserved. I have lived till now, within the circuit of these mountains, and yet cannot walk abroad without the sight of something, which I had never beheld before, or never heeded."

"The business of a poet," said Imlac, "is to examine, not the individual, but the species; to remark general properties and large appearances: he does not number the streaks of the tulip, or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest. He is to exhibit, in his portraits of nature, such prominent and striking features, as recall the original to every mind; and must neglect the minuter discriminations, which one may have remarked, and another have neglected, for those characteristicks which are alike obvious to vigilance and carelessness.

"But the knowledge of nature is only half the task of a poet; he must be acquainted, likewise, with all the modes of life. His character requires, that he estimate the happiness and misery of every condition; observe the power of all the passions in all their combinations, and trace the changes of the human mind, as they are modified by various institutions, and accidental influences of climate or custom, from the sprightliness of infancy to the despondence of decrepitude. He must divest himself of the prejudices of his age or country; he must consider right and wrong in their abstracted and inva-

riable state; he must disregard present laws and opinions, and rise to general and transcendental truths, which will always be the same; he must, therefore, content himself with the slow progress of his name; contemn the applause of his own time, and commit his claims to the justice of posterity. He must write, as the interpreter of nature, and the legislator of mankind, and consider himself, as presiding over the thoughts and manners of future generations; as a being superiour to time and place.

"His labour is not yet at an end: he must know many languages and many sciences; and, that his style may be worthy of his thoughts, must, by incessant practice, familiarize to himself every delicacy of speech and grace of harmony."

Chapter XI

IMLAC'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED. A HINT ON PILGRIMAGE

IMLAC now felt the enthusiastick fit, and was proceeding to aggrandize his own profession, when the prince cried out: "Enough! thou hast convinced me, that no human being can ever be a poet. Proceed with thy narration."

"To be a poet," said Imlac, "is, indeed, very difficult." "So difficult," returned the prince, "that I will, at present, hear no more of his labours. Tell me whither you went, when you had seen Persia."

"From Persia," said the poet, "I travelled through Syria, and for three years resided in Pales-

tine, where I conversed with great numbers of the northern and western nations of Europe; the nations which are now in possession of all power and all knowledge; whose armies are irresistible, and whose fleets command the remotest parts of the globe. When I compared these men with the natives of our own kingdom, and those that surround us, they appeared almost another order of beings. In their countries it is difficult to wish for any thing that may not be obtained: a thousand arts, of which we never heard, are continually labouring for their convenience and pleasure; and whatever their own climate has denied them is supplied by their commerce."

"By what means," said the prince, "are the Europeans thus powerful, or why, since they can so easily visit Asia and Africa, for trade or conquest, cannot the Asiaticks and Africans invade their coasts, plant colonies in their ports, and give laws to their natural princes? The same wind that carries them back would bring us thither."

"They are more powerful, sir, than we," answered Imlac, "because they are wiser; knowledge will always predominate over ignorance, as man governs the other animals. But why their knowledge is more than ours, I know not what reason can be given, but the unsearchable will of the supreme being."

"When," said the prince, with a sigh, "shall I be able to visit Palestine, and mingle with this mighty confluence of nations? Till that happy moment shall arrive, let me fill up the time with such

representations as thou canst give me. I am not ignorant of the motive that assembles such numbers in that place, and cannot but consider it as the centre of wisdom and piety, to which the best and wisest men of every land must be continually resorting."

"There are some nations," said Imlac, "that send few visitants to Palestine; for many numerous and learned sects in Europe concur to censure pilgrimage, as superstitious, or deride it as ridiculous."

"You know," said the prince, "how little my life has made me acquainted with diversity of opinions; it will be too long to hear the arguments on both sides; you, that have considered them, tell me the result."

"Pilgrimage," said Imlac, "like many other acts of piety, may be reasonable or superstitious, according to the principles upon which it is performed. Long journeys, in search of truth, are not commanded. Truth, such as is necessary to the regulation of life, is always found where it is honestly sought. Change of place is no natural cause of the increase of piety, for it inevitably produces dissipation of mind. Yet, since men go every day to view the fields where great actions have been performed, and return with stronger impressions of the event, curiosity of the same kind may naturally dispose us to view that country whence our religion had its beginning; and, I believe, no man surveys those awful scenes without some confirmation of holy resolutions. That the supreme being may be more easily propitiated in one

place than in another, is the dream of idle superstition; but that some places may operate upon our own minds in an uncommon manner, is an opinion which hourly experience will justify[e]. He who supposes that his vices may be more successfully combated in Palestine, will, perhaps, find himself mistaken, yet he may go thither without folly; he who thinks they will be more freely pardoned, dishonours, at once, his reason and religion."

"These," said the prince, "are European distinctions. I will consider them another time. What have you found to be the effect of knowledge? Are those nations happier than we?"

"There is so much infelicity," said the poet, "in the world, that scarce any man has leisure, from his own distresses, to estimate the comparative happiness of others. Knowledge is certainly one of the means of pleasure, as is confessed by the natural desire which every mind feels of increasing its ideas. Ignorance is mere privation, by which nothing can be produced; it is a vacuity, in which the soul sits motionless and torpid, for want of attraction; and, without knowing why, we always rejoice when we learn, and grieve when we forget. I am, therefore, inclined to conclude, that, if nothing counteracts the natural consequence of learning, we grow more happy, as our minds take a wider range.

[e] See Idler, No. 33, and note: and read, in Dr. Clarke's travels, the effect produced on his mind by the distant prospect of the Holy City, and by the habitual reverence of his guides. The passage exemplifies the sublime in narrative. See his Travels in Greece, Egypt, and the Holy Land, part ii. sect. i. 8vo. ed. vol. iv. p. 288.— Ed.

"In enumerating the particular comforts of life, we shall find many advantages on the side of the Europeans. They cure wounds and diseases, with which we languish and perish. We suffer inclemencies of weather, which they can obviate. They have engines for the despatch of many laborious works, which we must perform by manual industry. There is such communication between distant places, that one friend can hardly be said to be absent from another. Their policy removes all publick inconveniences: they have roads cut through their mountains, and bridges laid upon their rivers. And, if we descend to the privacies of life, their habitations are more commodious, and their possessions are more secure."

"They are surely happy," said the prince, "who have all these conveniences, of which I envy none so much as the facility with which separated friends interchange their thoughts."

"The Europeans," answered Imlac, "are less unhappy than we, but they are not happy. Human life is everywhere a state, in which much is to be endured, and little to be enjoyed."

Chapter XII

THE STORY OF IMLAC CONTINUED

"I AM not yet willing," said the prince, "to suppose, that happiness is so parsimoniously distributed to mortals; nor can believe but that, if I had the choice of life, I should be able to fill

every day with pleasure. I would injure no man, and should provoke no resentment: I would relieve every distress, and should enjoy the benedictions of gratitude. I would choose my friends among the wise, and my wife among the virtuous; and, therefore, should be in no danger from treachery or unkindness. My children should, by my care, be learned and pious, and would repay to my age what their childhood had received. What would dare to molest him, who might call, on every side, to thousands enriched by his bounty, or assisted by his power? And why should not life glide quietly away in the soft reciprocation of protection and reverence? All this may be done without the help of European refinements, which appear, by their effects, to be rather specious than useful. Let us leave them, and pursue our journey."

"From Palestine," said Imlac, "I passed through many regions of Asia: in the more civilized kingdoms, as a trader, and among the barbarians of the mountains, as a pilgrim. At last, I began to long for my native country, that I might repose, after my travels and fatigues, in the places where I had spent my earliest years, and gladden my old companions, with the recital of my adventures. Often did I figure to myself those with whom I had sported away the gay hours of dawning life, sitting round me in its evening, wondering at my tales, and listening to my counsels.

"When this thought had taken possession of my mind, I considered every moment as wasted, which

did not bring me nearer to Abissinia. I hastened into Egypt, and, notwithstanding my impatience, was detained ten months in the contemplation of its ancient magnificence, and in inquiries after the remains of its ancient learning. I found in Cairo a mixture of all nations; some brought thither by the love of knowledge, some by the hope of gain, and many by the desire of living, after their own manner, without observation, and of lying hid in the obscurity of multitudes: for in a city, populous as Cairo, it is possible to obtain, at the same time, the gratifications of society, and the secrecy of solitude.

"From Cairo I traveled to Suez, and embarked on the Red sea, passing along the coast, till I arrived at the port from which I had departed twenty years before. Here I joined myself to a caravan, and re-entered my native country.

"I now expected the caresses of my kinsmen, and the congratulations of my friends, and was not without hope that my father, whatever value he had set upon riches, would own, with gladness and pride, a son, who was able to add to the felicity and honour of the nation. But I was soon convinced that my thoughts were vain. My father had been dead fourteen years, having divided his wealth among my brothers, who were removed to some other provinces. Of my companions the greater part was in the grave; of the rest, some could, with difficulty, remember me, and some considered me, as one corrupted by foreign manners.

"A man, used to vicissitudes, is not easily dejected. I forgot, after a time, my disappointment, and endeavoured to recommend myself to the nobles of the kingdom; they admitted me to their tables, heard my story, and dismissed me. I opened a school, and was prohibited to teach. I then resolved to sit down in the quiet of domestick life, and addressed a lady that was fond of my conversation, but rejected my suit, because my father was a merchant.

"Wearied, at last, with solicitation and repulses, I resolved to hide myself for ever from the world, and depend no longer on the opinion or caprice of others. I waited for the time, when the gate of the happy valley should open, that I might bid farewell to hope and fear: the day came; my performance was distinguished with favour, and I resigned myself with joy to perpetual confinement."

"Has thou here found happiness at last?" said Rasselas. "Tell me, without reserve; art thou content with thy condition? or, dost thou wish to be again wandering and inquiring? All the inhabitants of this valley celebrate their lot, and, at the annual visit of the emperour, invite others to partake of their felicity."

"Great prince," said Imlac, "I shall speak the truth; I know not one of all your attendants who does not lament the hour when he entered this retreat. I am less unhappy than the rest, because I have a mind replete with images, which I can vary and combine at pleasure. I can amuse my solitude

by the renovation of the knowledge which begins to fade from my memory, and by recollection of the accidents of my past life. Yet all this ends in the sorrowful consideration, that my acquirements are now useless, and that none of my pleasures can be again enjoyed. The rest, whose minds have no impression but of the present moment, are either corroded by malignant passions, or sit stupid in the gloom of perpetual vacancy."

"What passions can infest those," said the prince, "who have no rivals? We are in a place where impotence precludes malice, and where all envy is repressed by community of enjoyments."

"There may be community," said Imlac, "of material possessions, but there can never be community of love or of esteem. It must happen, that one will please more than another; he that knows himself despised will always be envious; and still more envious and malevolent, if he is condemned to live in the presence of those who despise him. The invitations, by which they allure others to a state which they feel to be wretched, proceed from the natural malignity of hopeless misery. They are weary of themselves, and of each other, and expect to find relief in new companions. They envy the liberty which their folly has forfeited, and would gladly see all mankind imprisoned like themselves.

"From this crime, however, I am wholly free. No man can say that he is wretched by my persuasion. I look with pity on the crowds who are annually soliciting admission to captivity, and wish

that it were lawful for me to warn them of their danger."

"My dear Imlac," said the prince, "I will open to thee my whole heart. I have long meditated an escape from the happy valley. I have examined the mountains on every side, but find myself insuperably barred: teach me the way to break my prison; thou shalt be the companion of my flight, the guide of my rambles, the partner of my fortune, and my sole director in the CHOICE OF LIFE."

"Sir," answered the poet, "your escape will be difficult, and, perhaps, you may soon repent your curiosity. The world, which you figure to yourself smooth and quiet as the lake in the valley, you will find a sea foaming with tempests, and boiling with whirlpools; you will be sometimes overwhelmed by the waves of violence, and sometimes dashed against the rocks of treachery. Amidst wrongs and frauds, competitions and anxieties, you will wish, a thousand times, for these seats of quiet, and willingly quit hope to be free from fear."

"Do not seek to deter me from my purpose," said the prince: "I am impatient to see what thou hast seen; and, since thou art thyself weary of the valley, it is evident that thy former state was better than this. Whatever be the consequence of my experiment, I am resolved to judge, with mine own eyes, of the various conditions of men, and then to make, deliberately, my CHOICE OF LIFE.

"I am afraid," said Imlac, "you are hindered by stronger restraints than my persuasions; yet, if

your determination is fixed, I do not counsel you to despair. Few things are impossible to diligence and skill."

Chapter XIII

RASSELAS DISCOVERS THE MEANS OF ESCAPE

THE prince now dismissed his favourite to rest, but the narrative of wonders and novelties filled his mind with perturbation. He revolved all that he had heard, and prepared innumerable questions for the morning.

Much of his uneasiness was now removed. He had a friend to whom he could impart his thoughts, and whose experience could assist him in his designs. His heart was no longer condemned to swell with silent vexation. He thought that even the happy valley might be endured, with such a companion, and that, if they could range the world together, he should have nothing further to desire.

In a few days the water was discharged, and the ground dried. The prince and Imlac then walked out together, to converse, without the notice of the rest. The prince, whose thoughts were always on the wing, as he passed by the gate, said, with a countenance of sorrow, "Why art thou so strong, and why is man so weak?"

"Man is not weak," answered his companion; "knowledge is more than equivalent to force. The master of mechanicks laughs at strength. I can burst the gate, but cannot do it secretly. Some other expedient must be tried."

As they were walking on the side of the mountain, they observed that the conies, which the rain had driven from their burrows, had taken shelter among the bushes, and formed holes behind them, tending upwards, in an oblique line. "It has been the opinion of antiquity," said Imlac, "that human reason borrowed many arts from the instinct of animals; let us, therefore, not think ourselves degraded by learning from the cony. We may escape, by piercing the mountain in the same direction. We will begin, where the summit hangs over the middle part, and labour upwards, till we shall issue up beyond the prominence."

The eyes of the prince, when he heard this proposal, sparkled with joy. The execution was easy, and the success certain.

No time was now lost. They hastened, early in the morning, to choose a place proper for their mine. They clambered, with great fatigue, among crags and brambles, and returned without having discovered any part that favoured their design. The second and the third day were spent in the same manner, and with the same frustration. But, on the fourth, they found a small cavern, concealed by a thicket, where they resolved to make their experiment.

Imlac procured instruments proper to hew stone and remove earth, and they fell to their work on the next day with more eagerness than vigour. They were presently exhausted by their efforts, and sat down to pant upon the grass. The prince, for a moment, appeared to be discouraged. "Sir," said his

companion, "practice will enable us to continue our labour for a longer time; mark, however, how far we have advanced, and you will find, that our toil will sometime have an end. Great works are performed, not by strength, but perseverance: yonder palace was raised by single stones, yet you see its height and spaciousness. He that shall walk with vigour three hours a day, will pass, in seven years, a space equal to the circumference of the globe."

They returned to their work day after day, and, in a short time, found a fissure in the rock, which enabled them to pass far with very little obstruction. This Rasselas considered as a good omen. "Do not disturb your mind," said Imlac, "with other hopes or fears than reason may suggest; if you are pleased with prognosticks of good, you will be terrified, likewise, with tokens of evil, and your whole life will be a prey to superstition. Whatever facilitates our work is more than an omen, it is a cause of success. This is one of those pleasing surprises which often happen to active resolution. Many things, difficult to design, prove easy to performance."

Chapter XIV

RASSELAS AND IMLAC RECEIVE AN UNEXPECTED VISIT

THEY had now wrought their way to the middle, and solaced their toil with the approach of liberty, when the prince, coming down to refresh himself with air, found his sister Nekayah, standing

before the mouth of the cavity. He started, and stood confused, afraid to tell his design, yet hopeless to conceal it. A few moments determined him to repose on her fidelity, and secure her secrecy by a declaration without reserve.

"Do not imagine," said the princess, "that I came hither as a spy: I had long observed, from my window, that you and Imlac directed your walk every day towards the same point, but I did not suppose you had any better reason for the preference than a cooler shade, or more fragrant bank; nor followed you with any other design than to partake of your conversation. Since, then, not suspicion, but fondness, has detected you, let me not lose the advantage of my discovery. I am equally weary of confinement with yourself, and not less desirous of knowing what is done or suffered in the world. Permit me to fly with you from this tasteless tranquillity, which will yet grow more loathsome when you have left me. You may deny me to accompany you, but cannot hinder me from following."

The prince, who loved Nekayah, above his other sisters, had no inclination to refuse her request, and grieved, that he had lost an opportunity of showing his confidence by a voluntary communication. It was, therefore, agreed, that she should leave the valley with them; and that, in the mean time, she should watch, lest any other straggler should, by chance or curiosity, follow them to the mountain.

At length their labour was at an end; they saw light beyond the prominence, and, issuing to the top

of the mountain, beheld the Nile, yet a narrow current, wandering beneath them.

The prince looked round with rapture, anticipated all the pleasures of travel, and, in thought, was already transported beyond his father's dominions. Imlac, though very joyful at his escape, had less expectation of pleasure in the world, which he had before tried, and of which he had been weary.

Rasselas was so much delighted with a wider horizon, that he could not soon be persuaded to return into the valley. He informed his sister, that the way was open, and that nothing now remained but to prepare for their departure.

Chapter XV

THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS LEAVE THE VALLEY, AND SEE MANY WONDERS

THE prince and princess had jewels sufficient to make them rich, whenever they came into a place of commerce, which, by Imlac's direction, they hid in their clothes, and, on the night of the next full moon, all left the valley. The princess was followed only by a single favourite, who did not know whither she was going.

They clambered through the cavity, and began to go down on the other side. The princess and her maid turned their eyes towards every part, and, seeing nothing to bound their prospect, considered themselves, as in danger of being lost in a dreary vacuity. They stopped and trembled. "I am almost

afraid,'' said the princess,''to begin a journey, of which I cannot perceive an end, and to venture into this immense plain, where I may be approached, on every side, by men whom I never saw.'' The prince felt nearly the same emotions, though he thought it more manly to conceal them.

Imlac smiled at their terrours, and encouraged them to proceed; but the princess continued irresolute, till she had been, imperceptibly, drawn forward too far to return.

In the morning they found some shepherds in the field, who set milk and fruits before them. The princess wondered, that she did not see a palace ready for her reception, and a table spread with delicacies; but, being faint and hungry, she drank the milk, and eat the fruits, and thought them of a higher flavour than the produce of the valley.

They travelled forward by easy journeys, being all unaccustomed to toil or difficulty, and knowing that, though they might be missed, they could not be pursued. In a few days they came into a more populous region, where Imlac was diverted with the admiration, which his companions expressed at the diversity of manners, stations, and employments.

Their dress was such, as might not bring upon them the suspicion of having any thing to conceal; yet the prince, wherever he came, expected to be obeyed; and the princess was frightened, because those that came into her presence did not prostrate themselves before her. Imlac was forced to observe them with great vigilance, lest they should betray

their rank by their unusual behaviour, and detained them several weeks in the first village, to accustom them to the sight of common mortals.

By degrees, the royal wanderers were taught to understand that they had, for a time, laid aside their dignity, and were to expect only such regard, as liberality and courtesy could procure. And Imlac having, by many admonitions, prepared them to endure the tumults of a port, and the ruggedness of the commercial race, brought them down to the seacoast.

The prince and his sister, to whom everything was new, were gratified equally at all places, and, therefore, remained, for some months, at the port, without any inclination to pass further. Imlac was content with their stay, because he did not think it safe to expose them, unpractised in the world, to the hazards of a foreign country.

At last he began to fear, lest they should be discovered, and proposed to fix a day for their departure. They had no pretensions to judge for themselves, and referred the whole scheme to his direction. He, therefore, took passage in a ship to Suez; and, when the time came, with great difficulty, prevailed on the princess to enter the vessel. They had a quick and prosperous voyage, and from Suez traveled by land to Cairo.

Chapter XVI

THEY ENTER CAIRO, AND FIND EVERY MAN HAPPY

AS they approached the city, which filled the strangers with astonishment, "This," said Imlac to the prince, "is the place where travellers and merchants assemble from all the corners of the earth. You will here find men of every character, and every occupation. Commerce is here honourable: I will act as a merchant, and you shall live as strangers, who have no other end of travel than curiosity; it will soon be observed that we are rich; our reputation will procure us access to all whom we shall desire to know; you will see all the conditions of humanity, and enable yourself, at leisure, to make your CHOICE OF LIFE."

They now entered the town, stunned by the noise, and offended by the crowds. Instruction had not yet so prevailed over habit, but that they wondered to see themselves pass, undistinguished, along the street, and met, by the lowest of the people, without reverence or notice. The princess could not, at first, bear the thought of being levelled with the vulgar, and, for some days, continued in her chamber, where she was served by her favourite, Pekuah, as in the palace of the valley.

Imlac, who understood traffick, sold part of the jewels the next day, and hired a house, which he adorned with such magnificence, that he was immediately considered as a merchant of great wealth.

His politeness attracted many acquaintance, and his generosity made him courted by many dependants. His table was crowded by men of every nation, who all admired his knowledge, and solicited his favour. His companions, not being able to mix in the conversation, could make no discovery of their ignorance or surprise, and were gradually initiated in the world, as they gained knowledge of the language.

The prince had, by frequent lectures, been taught the use and nature of money; but the ladies could not, for a long time, comprehend what the merchants did with small pieces of gold and silver, or why things of so little use should be received as equivalent to the necessaries of life.

They studied the language two years, while Imlac was preparing to set before them the various ranks and conditions of mankind. He grew acquainted with all who had any thing uncommon in their fortune or conduct. He frequented the voluptuous and the frugal, the idle and the busy, the merchants and the men of learning.

The prince, being now able to converse with fluency, and having learned the caution necessary to be observed in his intercourse with strangers, began to accompany Imlac to places of resort, and to enter into all assemblies, that he might make his CHOICE OF LIFE.

For some time, he thought choice needless, because all appeared, to him, equally happy. Wherever he went he met gaiety and kindness, and heard the song of joy, or the laugh of carelessness. He be-

gan to believe, that the world overflowed with universal plenty, and that nothing was withheld either from want or merit; that every hand showered liberality, and every heart melted with benevolence; "and who then," says he, "will be suffered to be wretched?"

Imlac permitted the pleasing delusion, and was unwilling to crush the hope of inexperience, till one day, having sat awhile silent, "I know not," said the prince, "what can be the reason, that I am more unhappy than any of our friends. I see them perpetually and unalterably cheerful, but feel my own mind restless and uneasy. I am unsatisfied with those pleasures which I seem most to court; I live in the crowds of jollity, not so much to enjoy company, as to shun myself, and am only loud and merry to conceal my sadness."

"Every man," said Imlac, "may, by examining his own mind, guess what passes in the minds of others: when you feel that your own gaiety is counterfeit, it may justly lead you to suspect that of your companions not to be sincere. Envy is commonly reciprocal. We are long before we are convinced, that happiness is never to be found, and each believes it possessed by others, to keep alive the hope of obtaining it for himself. In the assembly, where you passed the last night, there appeared such sprightliness of air, and volatility of fancy, as might have suited beings of a higher order, formed to inhabit serener regions, inaccessible to care or sorrow; yet, believe me, prince, there was not one who did not dread

the moment, when solitude should deliver him to the tyranny of reflection."

"This," said the prince, "may be true of others, since it is true of me; yet, whatever be the general infelicity of man, one condition is more happy than another, and wisdom surely directs us to take the least evil in the CHOICE OF LIFE."

"The causes of good and evil," answered Imlac, "are so various and uncertain, so often entangled with each other, so diversified by various relations, and so much subject to accidents, which cannot be foreseen, that he, who would fix his condition upon incontestable reasons of preference, must live and die inquiring and deliberating."

"But surely," said Rasselas, "the wise men, to whom we listen with reverence and wonder, chose that mode of life for themselves, which they thought most likely to make them happy."

"Very few," said the poet, "live by choice. Every man is placed in his present condition by causes which acted without his foresight, and with which he did not always willingly co-operate; and, therefore, you will rarely meet one, who does not think the lot of his neighbour better than his own."

"I am pleased to think," said the prince, "that my birth has given me, at least, one advantage over others, by enabling me to determine for myself. I have here the world before me; I will review it at leisure: surely happiness is somewhere to be found."

Chapter XVII

THE PRINCE ASSOCIATES WITH YOUNG MEN OF SPIRIT AND GAIETY

RASSELAS rose next day, and resolved to begin his experiments upon life. "Youth," cried he, "is the time of gladness: I will join myself to the young men, whose only business is to gratify their desires, and whose time is all spent in a succession of enjoyments."

To such societies he was readily admitted, but a few days brought him back, weary and disgusted. Their mirth was without images; their laughter without motive; their pleasures were gross and sensual, in which the mind had no part; their conduct was, at once, wild and mean; they laughed at order and at law, but the frown of power dejected, and the eye of wisdom abashed them.

The prince soon concluded, that he should never be happy in a course of life, of which he was ashamed. He thought it unsuitable to a reasonable being to act without a plan, and to be sad or cheerful only by chance. "Happiness," said he, "must be something solid and permanent, without fear and without uncertainty."

But his young companions had gained so much of his regard by their frankness and courtesy, that he could not leave them, without warning and remonstrance. "My friends," said he, "I have seriously considered our manners and our prospects, and find that we have mistaken our own interest.

The first years of man must make provision for the last. He that never thinks, never can be wise. Perpetual levity must end in ignorance; and intemperance, though it may fire the spirits for an hour, will make life short or miserable. Let us consider, that youth is of no long duration, and that, in maturer age, when the enchantments of fancy shall cease, and phantoms of delight dance no more about us, we shall have no comforts but the esteem of wise men, and the means of doing good. Let us, therefore, stop, while to stop is in our power: let us live as men who are sometime to grow old, and to whom it will be the most dreadful of all evils to count their past years by follies, and to be reminded of their former luxuriance of health, only by the maladies which riot has produced."

They stared awhile, in silence, one upon another, and, at last, drove him away by a general chorus of continued laughter.

The consciousness that his sentiments were just, and his intentions kind, was scarcely sufficient to support him against the horrour of derision. But he recovered his tranquillity, and pursued his search.

Chapter XVIII

THE PRINCE FINDS A WISE AND HAPPY MAN

As he was one day walking in the street, he saw a spacious building, which all were, by the open doors, invited to enter: he followed the stream of people, and found it a hall or school of declamation,

in which professors read lectures to their auditory. He fixed his eye upon a sage, raised above the rest, who discoursed, with great energy, on the government of the passions. His look was venerable, his action graceful, his pronunciation clear, and his diction elegant. He showed, with great strength of sentiment, and variety of illustration, that human nature is degraded and debased, when the lower faculties predominate over the higher; that when fancy, the parent of passion, usurps the dominion of the mind, nothing ensues but the natural effect of unlawful government, perturbation and confusion; that she betrays the fortresses of the intellect to rebels, and excites her children to sedition against reason, their lawful sovereign. He compared reason to the sun, of which the light is constant, uniform, and lasting; and fancy to a meteor, of bright but transitory lustre, irregular in its motion, and delusive in its direction.

He then communicated the various precepts given, from time to time, for the conquest of passion, and displayed the happiness of those who had obtained the important victory, after which man is no longer the slave of fear, nor the fool of hope; is no more emaciated by envy, inflamed by anger, emasculated by tenderness, or depressed by grief; but walks on calmly through the tumults, or privacies of life, as the sun pursues alike his course through the calm or the stormy sky.

He enumerated many examples of heroes immovable by pain or pleasure, who looked with in-

difference on those modes or accidents, to which the vulgar give the names of good and evil. He exhorted his hearers to lay aside their prejudices, and arm themselves against the shafts of malice or misfortune, by invulnerable patience; concluding, that this state only was happiness, and that this happiness was in every one's power.

Rasselas listened to him, with the veneration due to the instructions of a superiour being, and, waiting for him at the door, humbly implored the liberty of visiting so great a master of true wisdom. The lecturer hesitated a moment, when Rasselas put a purse of gold into his hand, which he received with a mixture of joy and wonder.

"I have found," said the prince, at his return to Imlac, "a man who can teach all that is necessary to be known; who, from the unshaken throne of rational fortitude, looks down on the scenes of life changing beneath him. He speaks, and attention watches his lips. He reasons, and conviction closes his periods. This man shall be my future guide: I will learn his doctrines, and imitate his life."

"Be not too hasty," said Imlac, "to trust, or to admire the teachers of morality: they discourse, like angels, but they live, like men."

Rasselas, who could not conceive, how any man could reason so forcibly, without feeling the cogency of his own arguments, paid his visit in a few days, and was denied admission. He had now learned the power of money, and made his way, by a piece of gold, to the inner apartment, where he found the

philosopher, in a room half-darkened, with his eyes misty, and his face pale. "Sir," said he, "you are come at a time when all human friendship is useless; what I suffer cannot be remedied, what I have lost cannot be supplied. My daughter, my only daughter, from whose tenderness I expected all the comforts of my age, died last night of a fever. My views, my purposes, my hopes are at an end: I am now a lonely being, disunited from society."

"Sir," said the prince, "mortality is an event by which a wise man can never be surprised: we know that death is always near, and it should, therefore, always be expected." "Young man," answered the philosopher, "you speak like one that has never felt the pangs of separation." "Have you then forgot the precepts," said Rasselas, "which you so powerfully enforced? Has wisdom no strength to arm the heart against calamity? Consider, that external things are naturally variable, but truth and reason are always the same." "What comfort," said the mourner, "can truth and reason afford me? Of what effect are they now, but to tell me, that my daughter will not be restored?"

The prince, whose humanity would not suffer him to insult misery with reproof, went away, convinced of the emptiness of rhetorical sound, and the inefficacy of polished periods and studied sentences.

Chapter XIX

A GLIMPSE OF PASTORAL LIFE

HE was still eager upon the same inquiry: and having heard of a hermit, that lived near the lowest cataract of the Nile, and filled the whole country with the fame of his sanctity, resolved to visit his retreat, and inquire, whether that felicity, which publick life could not afford, was to be found in solitude; and whether a man, whose age and virtue made him venerable, could teach any peculiar art of shunning evils, or enduring them?

Imlac and the princess agreed to accompany him, and, after the necessary preparations, they began their journey. Their way lay through the fields, where shepherds tended their flocks, and the lambs were playing upon the pasture. "This," said the poet, "is the life which has been often celebrated for its innocence and quiet; let us pass the heat of the day among the shepherds' tents, and know, whether all our searches are not to terminate in pastoral simplicity."

The proposal pleased them, and they induced the shepherds, by small presents and familiar questions, to tell their opinion of their own state: they were so rude and ignorant, so little able to compare the good with the evil of the occupation, and so indistinct in their narratives and descriptions, that very little could be learned from them. But it was evident, that their hearts were cankered with discon-

tent; that they considered themselves, as condemned to labour for the luxury of the rich, and looked up, with stupid malevolence, toward those that were placed above them.

The princess pronounced with vehemence, that she would never suffer these envious savages to be her companions, and that she should not soon be desirous of seeing any more specimens of rustick happiness; but could not believe that all the accounts of primeval pleasures were fabulous; and was yet in doubt, whether life had any thing that could be justly preferred to the placid gratifications of fields and woods. She hoped, that the time would come, when, with a few virtuous and elegant companions, she should gather flowers, planted by her own hand, fondle the lambs of her own ewe, and listen, without care, among brooks and breezes, to one of her maidens reading in the shade.

Chapter XX

THE DANGER OF PROSPERITY

ON tne next day they continued their journey, till the heat compelled them to look round for shelter. At a small distance, they saw a thick wood, which they no sooner entered, than they perceived that they were approaching the habitations of men. The shrubs were diligently cut away to open walks, where the shades were darkest; the boughs of opposite trees were artificially interwoven; seats of flowery turf were raised in vacant spaces, and a

rivulet, that wantoned along the side of a winding path, had its banks sometimes opened into small basins, and its streams sometimes obstructed by little mounds of stone, heaped together to increase its murmurs.

They passed slowly through the wood, delighted with such unexpected accommodations, and entertained each other with conjecturing, what, or who, he could be, that, in those rude and unfrequented regions, had leisure and art for such harmless luxury.

As they advanced, they heard the sound of musick, and saw youths and virgins dancing in the grove; and, going still further, beheld a stately palace, built upon a hill, surrounded with woods. The laws of eastern hospitality allowed them to enter, and the master welcomed them, like a man liberal and wealthy.

He was skilful enough in appearances, soon to discern that they were no common guests, and spread his table with magnificence. The eloquence of Imlac caught his attention, and the lofty courtesy of the princess excited his respect. When they offered to depart, he entreated their stay, and was the next day still more unwilling to dismiss them than before. They were easily persuaded to stop, and civility grew up, in time, to freedom and confidence.

The prince now saw all the domesticks cheerful, and all the face of nature smiling round the place, and could not forbear to hope that he should find here what he was seeking; but when he was con-

gratulating the master upon his possessions, he answered, with a sigh: "My condition has, indeed, the appearance of happiness, but appearances are delusive. My prosperity puts my life in danger; the bassa of Egypt is my enemy, incensed only by my wealth and popularity. I have been, hitherto, protected against him by the princes of the country; but, as the favour of the great is uncertain, I know not, how soon my defenders may be persuaded to share the plunder with the bassa. I have sent my treasures into a distant country, and, upon the first alarm, am prepared to follow them. Then will my enemies riot in my mansion, and enjoy the gardens which I have planted."

They all joined in lamenting his danger, and deprecating his exile; and the princess was so much disturbed with the tumult of grief and indignation, that she retired to her apartment. They continued with their kind inviter a few days longer, and then went forward to find the hermit.

Chapter XXI

THE HAPPINESS OF SOLITUDE. THE HERMIT'S HISTORY

THEY came, on the third day, by the direction of the peasants, to the hermit's cell: it was a cavern, in the side of a mountain, over-shadowed with palm-trees; at such a distance from the cataract, that nothing more was heard than a gentle uniform murmur, such as composed the mind to pensive

meditation, especially when it was assisted by the wind whistling among the branches. The first rude essay of nature had been so much improved by human labour, that the cave contained several apartments, appropriated to different uses, and often afforded lodging to travellers, whom darkness or tempests happened to overtake.

The hermit sat on a bench at the door, to enjoy the coolness of the evening. On one side lay a book, with pens and papers, on the other, mechanical instruments of various kinds. As they approached him unregarded, the princess observed, that he had not the countenance of a man that had found, or could teach the way to happiness.

They saluted him with great respect, which he repaid, like a man not unaccustomed to the forms of courts. "My children," said he, "if you have lost your way, you shall be willingly supplied with such conveniences, for the night, as this cavern will afford. I have all that nature requires, and you will not expect delicacies in a hermit's cell."

They thanked him, and, entering, were pleased with the neatness and regularity of the place. The hermit set flesh and wine before them, though he fed only upon fruits and water. His discourse was cheerful without levity, and pious without enthusiasm. He soon gained the esteem of his guests, and the princess repented of her hasty censure.

At last Imlac began thus: "I do not now wonder that your reputation is so far extended; we have heard at Cairo of your wisdom, and came hither

to implore your direction for this young man and maiden, in the CHOICE OF LIFE."

"To him that lives well," answered the hermit, "every form of life is good; nor can I give any other rule for choice, than to remove from all apparent evil."

"He will remove most certainly from evil," said the prince, "who shall devote himself to that solitude, which you have recommended by your example."

"I have, indeed, lived fifteen years in solitude," said the hermit, "but have no desire that my example should gain any imitators. In my youth I professed arms, and was raised, by degrees, to the highest military rank. I have traversed wide countries, at the head of my troops, and seen many battles and sieges. At last, being disgusted by the preferment of a younger officer, and feeling, that my vigour was beginning to decay, I was resolved to close my life in peace, having found the world full of snares, discord, and misery. I had once escaped from the pursuit of the enemy by the shelter of this cavern, and, therefore, chose it for my final residence. I employed artificers to form it into chambers, and stored it with all that I was likely to want.

"For some time after my retreat, I rejoiced, like a tempest-beaten sailor at his entrance into the harbour, being delighted with the sudden change of the noise and hurry of war to stillness and repose. When the pleasure of novelty went away, I employed my hours in examining the plants which grow in the

valley, and the minerals which I collected from the rocks. But that inquiry is now grown tasteless and irksome. I have been, for some time, unsettled and distracted; my mind is disturbed with a thousand perplexities of doubt, and vanities of imagination, which hourly prevail upon me, because I have no opportunities of relaxation or diversion. I am sometimes ashamed to think, that I could not secure myself from vice, but by retiring from the exercise of virtue, and begin to suspect, that I was rather impelled by resentment, than led by devotion, into solitude. My fancy riots in scenes of folly, and I lament, that I have lost so much, and have gained so little. In solitude, if I escape the example of bad men, I want, likewise, the counsel and conversation of the good. I have been long comparing the evils with the advantages of society, and resolve to return into the world to-morrow. The life of a solitary man will be certainly miserable, but not certainly devout."

They heard his resolution with surprise, but, after a short pause, offered to conduct him to Cairo. He dug up a considerable treasure, which he had hid among the rocks, and accompanied them to the city, on which, as he approached it, he gazed with rapture.

Chapter XXII

THE HAPPINESS OF A LIFE, LED ACCORDING TO NATURE

RASSELAS went often to an assembly of learned men, who met, at stated times, to unbend their minds, and compare their opinions. Their manners were somewhat coarse, but their conversation was instructive, and their disputations acute, though sometimes too violent, and often continued, till neither controvertist remembered, upon what question they began. Some faults were almost general among them; every one was desirous to dictate to the rest, and every one was pleased to hear the genius or knowledge of another depreciated.

In this assembly Rasselas was relating his interview with the hermit, and the wonder with which he heard him censure a course of life, which he had so deliberately chosen, and so laudably followed. The sentiments of the hearers were various. Some were of opinion, that the folly of his choice had been justly punished by condemnation to perpetual perseverance. One of the youngest among them, with great vehemence, pronounced him a hypocrite. Some talked of the right of society to the labour of individuals, and considered retirement as a desertion of duty. Others readily allowed, that there was a time, when the claims of the publick were satisfied, and when a man might properly sequester himself, to review his life, and purify his heart.

One, who appeared more affected with the narrative than the rest, thought it likely, that the hermit would, in a few years, go back to his retreat, and, perhaps, if shame did not restrain, or death intercept him, return once more from his retreat into the world: "For the hope of happiness," said he, "is so strongly impressed, that the longest experience is not able to efface it. Of the present state, whatever it may be, we feel, and are forced to confess, the misery; yet, when the same state is again at a distance, imagination paints it as desirable. But the time will surely come, when desire will be no longer our torment, and no man shall be wretched, but by his own fault."

"This," said a philospher, who had heard him with tokens of great impatience, "is the present condition of a wise man. The time is already come, when none are wretched, but by their own fault. Nothing is more idle, than to inquire after happiness, which nature has kindly placed within our reach. The way to be happy is to live according to nature, in obedience to that universal and unalterable law, with which every heart is originally impressed; which is not written on it by precept, but engraven by destiny, not instilled by education, but infused at our nativity. He that lives according to nature will suffer nothing from the delusions of hope, or importunities of desire; he will receive and reject with equability of temper; and act or suffer, as the reason of things shall alternately prescribe. Other men may amuse themselves with subtle definitions,

or intricate ratiocinations. Let them learn to be wise by easier means; let them observe the hind of the forest, and the linnet of the grove; let them consider the life of animals, whose motions are regulated by instinct; they obey their guide, and are happy. Let us, therefore, at length, cease to dispute, and learn to live; throw away the incumbrance of precepts, which they, who utter them, with so much pride and pomp, do not understand, and carry with us this simple and intelligible maxim: That deviation from nature is deviation from happiness."

When he had spoken, he looked round him with a placid air, and enjoyed the consciousness of his own beneficence. "Sir," said the prince, with great modesty, "as I, like all the rest of mankind, am desirous of felicity, my closest attention has been fixed upon your discourse: I doubt not the truth of a position, which a man so learned has, so confidently, advanced. Let me only know, what it is to live according to nature."

"When I find young men so humble and so docile," said the philosopher, "I can deny them no information which my studies have enabled me to afford. To live according to nature, is to act always with due regard to the fitness arising from the relations and qualities of causes and effects; to concur with the great and unchangeable scheme of universal felicity; to co-operate with the general disposition and tendency of the present system of things."

The prince soon found that this was one of the sages whom he should understand less, as he heard

him longer. He, therefore, bowed, and was silent, and the philosopher, supposing him satisfied, and the rest vanquished, rose up and departed, with the air of a man that had co-operated with the present system.

Chapter XXIII

THE PRINCE AND HIS SISTER DIVIDE BETWEEN THEM THE WORK OF OBSERVATION

RASSELAS returned home full of reflections, doubtful how to direct his future steps. Of the way to happiness, he found the learned and simple equally ignorant; but, as he was yet young, he flattered himself that he had time remaining for more experiments, and further inquiries. He communicated to Imlac his observations and his doubts, but was answered by him with new doubts, and remarks that gave him no comfort. He, therefore, discoursed more frequently and freely with his sister, who had yet the same hope with himself, and always assisted him to give some reason why, though he had been, hitherto, frustrated, he might succeed at last.

"We have, hitherto," said she, "known but little of the world: we have never yet been either great or mean. In our own country, though we had royalty, we had no power; and, in this, we have not yet seen the private recesses of domestick peace. Imlac favours not our search, lest we should, in time, find him mistaken. We will divide the task between us: you shall try what is to be found in the splendour of courts, and I will range the shades of humbler life.

Perhaps command and authority may be the supreme blessings, as they afford most opportunities of doing good: or, perhaps, what this world can give may be found in the modest habitations of middle fortune, too low for great designs, and too high for penury and distress."

Chapter XXIV

THE PRINCE EXAMINES THE HAPPINESS OF HIGH STATIONS

RASSELAS applauded the design, and appeared, next day, with a splendid retinue at the court of the bassa. He was soon distinguished for his magnificence, and admitted as a prince, whose curiosity had brought him from distant countries, to an intimacy with the great officers, and frequent conversation with the bassa himself.

He was, at first, inclined to believe, that the man must be pleased with his own condition, whom all approached with reverence, and heard with obedience, and who had the power to extend his edicts to a whole kingdom. "There can be no pleasure," said he, "equal to that of feeling, at once, the joy of thousands, all made happy by wise administration. Yet, since by the law of subordination, this sublime delight can be in one nation but the lot of one, it is, surely, reasonable to think, that there is some satisfaction more popular and accessible; and that millions can hardly be subjected to the will of a

single man, only to fill his particular breast with incommunicable content.''

These thoughts were often in his mind, and he found no solution of the difficulty. But, as presents and civilities gained him more familiarity, he found that almost every man, who stood high in employment, hated all the rest, and was hated by them, and that their lives were a continual succession of plots and detections, stratagems and escapes, faction and treachery. Many of those, who surrounded the bassa, were sent only to watch and report his conduct; every tongue was muttering censure, and every eye was searching for a fault.

At last the letters of revocation arrived, the bassa was carried in chains to Constantinople, and his name was mentioned no more.

''What are we now to think of the prerogatives of power?'' said Rasselas to his sister: ''is it without any efficacy to good? or, is the subordinate degree only dangerous, and the supreme safe and glorious? Is the sultan the only happy man in his dominions? or, is the sultan himself subject to the torments of suspicion, and the dread of enemies?''

In a short time the second bassa was deposed. The sultan, that had advanced him, was murdered by the janizaries, and his successour had other views, and different favourites.

Chapter XXV

THE PRINCESS PURSUES HER INQUIRY WITH MORE DILIGENCE THAN SUCCESS

THE princess, in the mean time, insinuated herself into many families; for there are few doors, through which liberality, joined with good-humour, cannot find its way. The daughters of many houses were airy and cheerful, but Nekayah had been too long accustomed to the conversation of Imlac and her brother, to be much pleased with childish levity, and prattle, which had no meaning. She found their thoughts narrow, their wishes low, and their merriment often artificial. Their pleasures, poor as they were, could not be preserved pure, but were imbittered by petty competitions, and worthless emulation. They were always jealous of the beauty of each other; of a quality to which solicitude can add nothing, and from which detraction can take nothing away. Many were in love with triflers, like themselves, and many fancied that they were in love, when, in truth, they were only idle. Their affection was not fixed on sense or virtue, and, therefore, seldom ended but in vexation. Their grief, however, like their joy, was transient; every thing floated in their mind, unconnected with the past or future; so that one desire easily gave way to another, as a second stone, cast into the water, effaces and confounds the circles of the first.

With these girls she played, as with inoffensive

animals, and found them proud of her countenance, and weary of her company.

But her purpose was to examine more deeply, and her affability easily persuaded the hearts that were swelling with sorrow, to discharge their secrets in her ear: and those, whom hope flattered, or prosperity delighted, often courted her to partake their pleasures.

The princess and her brother commonly met in the evening in a private summer house, on the bank of the Nile, and related to each other the occurrences of the day. As they were sitting together, the princess cast her eyes upon the river that flowed before her. "Answer," said she, "great father of waters, thou that rollest thy floods through eighty nations, to the invocations of the daughter of thy native king. Tell me, if thou waterest, through all thy course, a single habitation from which thou dost not hear the murmurs of complaint?"

"You are then," said Rasselas, "not more successful in private houses, than I have been in courts." "I have, since the last partition of our provinces," said the princess, "enabled myself to enter familiarly into many families, where there was the fairest show of prosperity and peace, and know not one house that is not haunted by some fury, that destroys their quiet.

"I did not seek ease among the poor, because I concluded that, there, it could not be found. But I saw many poor, whom I had supposed to live in affluence. Poverty has, in large cities, very different

appearances; it is often concealed in splendour, and often in extravagance. It is the care of a very great part of mankind to conceal their indigence from the rest; they support themselves by temporary expedients, and every day is lost in contriving for the morrow.

"This, however, was an evil, which, though frequent, I saw with less pain, because I could relieve it. Yet some have refused my bounties; more offended with my quickness to detect their wants, than pleased with my readiness to succour them: and others, whose exigencies compelled them to admit my kindness, have never been able to forgive their benefactress. Many, however, have been sincerely grateful, without the ostentation of gratitude, or the hope of other favours."

Chapter XXVI

THE PRINCESS CONTINUES HER REMARKS UPON PRIVATE LIFE

NEKAYAH, perceiving her brother's attention fixed, proceeded in her narrative.

"In families, where there is, or is not, poverty, there is commonly discord: if a kingdom be, as Imlac tells us, a great family, a family, likewise, is a little kingdom, torn with factions, and exposed to revolutions. An unpractised observer expects the love of parents and children to be constant and equal; but this kindness seldom continues beyond the years of infancy; in a short time the children

become rivals to their parents. Benefits are allayed by reproaches, and gratitude debased by envy.

"Parents and children seldom act in concert: each child endeavours to appropriate the esteem, or fondness of the parents; and the parents, with yet less temptation, betray each other to their children; thus some place their confidence in the father, and some in the mother, and, by degrees, the house is filled with artifices and feuds.

"The opinions of children and parents, of the young and the old, are naturally opposite, by the contrary effects of hope and despondence, of expectation and experience, without crime or folly on either side. The colours of life, in youth and age, appear different, as the face of nature, in spring and winter. And how can children credit the assertions of parents, which their own eyes show them to be false?

"Few parents act in such a manner, as much to enforce their maxims, by the credit of their lives. The old man trusts wholly to slow contrivance and gradual progression: the youth expects to force his way by genius, vigour, and precipitance. The old man pays regard to riches, and the youth reverences virtue. The old man deifies prudence: the youth commits himself to magnanimity and chance. The young man, who intends no ill, believes that none is intended, and, therefore, acts with openness and candour: but his father, having suffered the injuries of fraud, is impelled to suspect, and, too often, allured to practise it. Age looks with anger on the temerity

of youth, and youth with contempt on the scrupulosity of age. Thus parents and children, for the greatest part, live on to love less and less: and, if those whom nature has thus closely united are the torments of each other, where shall we look for tenderness and consolation?"

"Surely," said the prince, "you must have been unfortunate in your choice of acquaintance: I am unwilling to believe, that the most tender of all relations is thus impeded, in its effects, by natural necessity."

"Domestick discord," answered she, "is not inevitably and fatally necessary; but yet it is not easily avoided. We seldom see that a whole family is virtuous: the good and evil cannot well agree: and the evil can yet less agree with one another: even the virtuous fall, sometimes, to variance, when their virtues are of different kinds, and tending to extremes. In general, those parents have most reverence who most deserve it: for he that lives well cannot be despised.

"Many other evils infest private life. Some are the slaves of servants, whom they have trusted with their affairs. Some are kept in continual anxiety, by the caprice of rich relations, whom they cannot please, and dare not offend. Some husbands are imperious, and some wives perverse: and, as it is always more easy to do evil than good, though the wisdom or virtue of one can very rarely make many happy, the folly or vice of one may often make many miserable."

"If such be the general effect of marriage," said the prince, "I shall, for the future, think it dangerous to connect my interest with that of another, lest I should be unhappy by my partner's fault."

"I have met," said the princess, "with many who live single for that reason; but I never found that their prudence ought to raise envy. They dream away their time without friendship, without fondness, and are driven to rid themselves of the day, for which they have no use, by childish amusements, or vitious delights. They act as beings under the constant sense of some known inferiority, that fills their minds with rancour, and their tongues with censure. They are peevish at home, and malevolent abroad; and, as the outlaws of human nature, make it their business and their pleasure to disturb that society, which debars them from its privileges. To live without feeling or exciting sympathy; to be fortunate without adding to the felicity of others, or afflicted without tasting the balm of pity, is a state more gloomy than solitude: it is not retreat, but exclusion from mankind. Marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures."

"What then is to be done?" said Rasselas; "the more we inquire, the less we can resolve. Surely he is most likely to please himself, that has no other inclination to regard."

Chapter XXVII

DISQUISITION UPON GREATNESS

THE conversation had a short pause. The prince, having considered his sister's observations, told her that she had surveyed life with prejudice, and supposed misery where she did not find it. "Your narrative," says he, "throws yet a darker gloom upon the prospects of futurity: the predictions of Imlac were but faint sketches of the evils painted by Nekayah. I have been lately convinced, that quiet is not the daughter of grandeur, or of power: that her presence is not to be bought by wealth, nor enforced by conquest. It is evident, that as any man acts in a wider compass, he must be more exposed to opposition from enmity, or miscarriage from chance; whoever has many to please or to govern, must use the ministry of many agents, some of whom will be wicked, and some ignorant; by some he will be misled, and by others betrayed. If he gratifies one, he will offend another: those that are not favoured will think themselves injured; and, since favours can be conferred but upon few, the greater number will be always discontented."

"The discontent," said the princess, "which is thus unreasonable, I hope, that I shall always have spirit to despise, and you power to repress."

"Discontent," answered Rasselas, "will not always be without reason under the most just and vigilant administration of publick affairs. None, however attentive, can always discover that merit, which

indigence or faction may happen to obscure; and none, however powerful, can always reward it. Yet, he that sees inferiour desert advanced above him, will naturally impute that preference to partiality or caprice; and, indeed, it can scarcely be hoped that any man, however magnanimous by nature, or exalted by condition, will be able to persist, for ever, in the fixed and inexorable justice of distribution; he will sometimes indulge his own affections, and sometimes those of his favourites; he will permit some to please him who can never serve him; he will discover in those whom he loves, qualities which, in reality, they do not possess; and to those, from whom he receives pleasure, he will, in his turn, endeavour to give it. Thus will recommendations sometimes prevail, which were purchased by money, or by the more destructive bribery of flattery and servility.

"He that has much to do will do something wrong, and, of that wrong must suffer the consequences; and, if it were possible that he should always act rightly, yet, when such numbers are to judge of his conduct, the bad will censure and obstruct him by malevolence, and the good sometimes by mistake.

"The highest stations cannot, therefore, hope to be the abodes of happiness, which I would willingly believe to have fled from thrones and palaces to seats of humble privacy, and placid obscurity. For what can hinder the satisfaction, or intercept the expectations of him, whose abilities are adequate to

his employments; who sees, with his own eyes, the whole circuit of his influence; who chooses, by his own knowledge, all whom he trusts; and whom none are tempted to deceive by hope or fear? Surely he has nothing to do, but to love and to be loved, to be virtuous and to be happy."

"Whether perfect happiness would be procured by perfect goodness," said Nekayah, "this world will never afford an opportunity of deciding. But this, at least, may be maintained, that we do not always find visible happiness, in proportion to visible virtue. All natural, and almost all political evils, are incident alike to the bad and good; they are confounded in the misery of a famine, and not much distinguished in the fury of a faction; they sink together in a tempest, and are driven together from their country by invaders. All that virtue can afford is quietness of conscience, a steady prospect of a happier state; this may enable us to endure calamity with patience; but remember, that patience must suppose pain.

Chapter XXVIII

RASSELAS AND NEKAYAH CONTINUE THEIR CONVERSATION

"DEAR princess," said Rasselas, "you fall into the common errours of exaggeratory declamation, by producing, in a familiar disquisition, examples of national calamities, and scenes of extensive misery, which are found in books, rather than in the world, and which, as they are

horrid, are ordained to be rare. Let us not imagine evils which we do not feel, nor injure life by misrepresentations; I cannot bear that querulous eloquence, which threatens every city with a siege, like that of Jerusalem, that makes famine attend on every flight of locusts, and suspends pestilence on the wing of every blast that issues from the south.

"On necessary and inevitable evils, which overwhelm kingdoms at once, all disputation is vain: when they happen they must be endured. But it is evident, that these bursts of universal distress are more dreaded than felt; thousands, and ten thousands, flourish in youth, and wither in age, without the knowledge of any other than domestick evils, and share the same pleasures and vexations, whether their kings are mild or cruel, whether the armies of their country pursue their enemies, or retreat before them. While courts are disturbed with intestine competitions, and ambassadours are negotiating in foreign countries, the smith still plies his anvil, and the husbandman drives his plough forward; the necessaries of life are required and obtained; and the successive business of the seasons continues to make its wonted revolutions.

"Let us cease to consider what, perhaps, may never happen, and what, when it shall happen, will laugh at human speculation. We will not endeavour to modify the motions of the elements, or to fix the destiny of kingdoms. It is our business to consider what beings, like us, may perform; each labouring

for his own happiness, by promoting, within his circle, however narrow, the happiness of others.

"Marriage is evidently the dictate of nature; men and women are made to be companions of each other; and, therefore, I cannot be persuaded, but that marriage is one of the means of happiness."

"I know not," said the princess, "whether marriage be more than one of the innumerable modes of human misery. When I see, and reckon, the various forms of connubial infelicity, the unexpected causes of lasting discord, the diversities of temper, the oppositions of opinion, the rude collisions of contrary desire, where both are urged by violent impulses, the obstinate contests of disagreeable virtues, where both are supported by consciousness of good intention, I am, sometimes, disposed to think, with the severer casuists of most nations, that marriage is rather permitted than approved, and that none, but by the instigation of a passion, too much indulged, entangle themselves with indissoluble compacts."

"You seem to forget," replied Rasselas, "that you have, even now, represented celibacy, as less happy than marriage. Both conditions may be bad, but they cannot both be worst. Thus it happens, when wrong opinions are entertained, that they mutually destroy each other, and leave the mind open to truth."

"I did not expect," answered the princess, "to hear that imputed to falsehood, which is the consequence only of frailty. To the mind, as to the eye, it is difficult to compare, with exactness, objects,

vast in their extent, and various in their parts. Where we see, or conceive, the whole at once, we readily note the discriminations, and decide the preference: but of two systems, of which neither can be surveyed, by any human being, in its full compass of magnitude, and multiplicity of complication, where is the wonder, that, judging of the whole by parts, I am alternately affected by one and the other, as either presses on my memory or fancy? We differ from ourselves, just as we differ from each other, when we see only part of the question, as in the multifarious relations of politicks and morality; but when we perceive the whole at once, as in numerical computations, all agree in one judgment, and none ever varies his opinion."

"Let us not add," said the prince, "to the other evils of life, the bitterness of controversy, nor endeavour to vie with each other in subtilties of argument. We are employed in a search, of which both are equally to enjoy the success, or suffer by the miscarriage. It is, therefore, fit that we assist each other. You, surely, conclude too hastily from the infelicity of marriage against its institution: will not the misery of life prove equally, that life cannot be the gift of heaven? The world must be peopled by marriage, or peopled without it."

"How the world is to be peopled," returned Nekayah, "is not my care, and needs not be yours. I see no danger that the present generation should omit to leave successors behind them: we are not now inquiring for the world, but for ourselves."

Chapter XXIX

THE DEBATE ON MARRIAGE CONTINUED

"THE good of the whole," says Rasselas, "is the same with the good of all its parts. If marriage be best for mankind, it must be evidently best for individuals, or a permanent and necessary duty must be the cause of evil, and some must be inevitably sacrificed to the convenience of others. In the estimate, which you have made of the two states, it appears, that the incommodities of a single life are, in a great measure, necessary and certain, but those of the conjugal state, accidental and avoidable.

"I cannot forbear to flatter myself, that prudence and benevolence will make marriage happy. The general folly of mankind is the cause of general complaint. What can be expected, but disappointment and repentance, from a choice made in the immaturity of youth, in the ardour of desire, without judgment, without foresight, without inquiry after conformity of opinions, similarity of manners, rectitude of judgment, or purity of sentiment?

"Such is the common process of marriage. A youth and maiden, meeting by chance, or brought together by artifice, exchange glances, reciprocate civilities, go home, and dream of one another. Having little to divert attention, or diversify thought, they find themselves uneasy, when they are apart, and, therefore, conclude that they shall be happy together. They marry, and discover what nothing

but voluntary blindness before had concealed; they wear out life in altercations, and charge nature with cruelty.

"From those early marriages proceeds, likewise, the rivalry of parents and children; the son is eager to enjoy the world, before the father is willing to forsake it, and there is hardly room, at once, for two generations. The daughter begins to bloom, before the mother can be content to fade, and neither can forbear to wish for the absence of the other.

"Surely all these evils may be avoided, by that deliberation and delay, which prudence prescribes to irrevocable choice. In the variety and jollity of youthful pleasures, life may be well enough supported, without the help of a partner. Longer time will increase experience, and wider views will allow better opportunities of inquiry and selection: one advantage, at least, will be certain; the parents will be visibly older than their children."

"What reason cannot collect," said Nekayah, "and what experiment has not yet taught, can be known only from the report of others. I have been told, that late marriages are not eminently happy. This is a question too important to be neglected, and I have often proposed it to those, whose accuracy of remark, and comprehensiveness of knowledge, made their suffrages worthy of regard. They have generally determined, that it is dangerous for a man and woman to suspend their fate upon each other, at a time, when opinions are fixed, and habits are established; when friendships have been con-

tracted on both sides; when life has been planned into method, and the mind has long enjoyed the contemplation of its own prospects.

"It is scarcely possible that two, traveling through the world, under the conduct of chance, should have been both directed to the same path, and it will not often happen, that either will quit the track which custom has made pleasing. When the desultory levity of youth has settled into regularity, it is soon succeeded by pride, ashamed to yield, or obstinacy, delighting to contend. And, even though mutual esteem produces mutual desire to please, time itself, as it modifies unchangeably the external mien, determines, likewise, the direction of the passions, and gives an inflexible rigidity to the manners. Long customs are not easily broken: he that attempts to change the course of his own life, very often labours in vain; and how shall we do that for others, which we are seldom able to do for ourselves!"

"But, surely," interposed the prince, "you suppose the chief motive of choice forgotten or neglected. Whenever I shall seek a wife, it shall be my first question, whether she be willing to be led by reason."

"Thus it is," said Nekayah, "that philosophers are deceived. There are a thousand familiar disputes, which reason can never decide; questions that elude investigation, and make logick ridiculous; cases where something must be done, and where little can be said. Consider the state of mankind, and inquire how few can be supposed to act, upon any

occasions, whether small or great, with all the reasons of action present to their minds. Wretched would be the pair, above all names of wretchedness, who should be doomed to adjust by reason, every morning, all the minute detail of a domestick day.

"Those who marry at an advanced age, will, probably, escape the encroachments of their children; but, in diminution of this advantage, they will be likely to leave them, ignorant and helpless, to a guardian's mercy; or, if that should not happen, they must, at least, go out of the world, before they see those whom they love best, either wise or great.

"From their children, if they have less to fear, they have less also to hope; and they lose, without equivalent, the joys of early love, and the convenience of uniting with manners pliant, and minds susceptible of new impressions, which might wear away their dissimilitudes by long cohabitation, as soft bodies, by continual attrition, conform their surfaces to each other.

"I believe it will be found, that those who marry late, are best pleased with their children, and those who marry early with their partners."

"The union of these two affections," said Rasselas, "would produce all that could be wished. Perhaps there is a time, when marriage might unite them, a time neither too early for the father, nor too late for the husband."

"Every hour," answered the princess, "confirms my prejudice in favour of the position, so often uttered by the mouth of Imlac: 'That nature sets her

gifts on the right hand and on the left.' Those conditions, which flatter hope and attract desire, are so constituted, that, as we approach one, we recede from another. There are goods so opposed, that we cannot seize both, but, by too much prudence, may pass between them, at too great a distance to reach either. This is often the fate of long consideration; he does nothing, who endeavours to do more than is allowed to humanity. Flatter not yourself with contrarieties of pleasure. Of the blessings set before you make your choice, and be content. No man can taste the fruits of autumn, while he is delighting his scent with the flowers of the spring; no man can, at the same time, fill his cup from the source and from the mouth of the Nile."

Chapter XXX

IMLAC ENTERS, AND CHANGES THE CONVERSATION

HERE Imlac entered, and interrupted them. "Imlac," said Rasselas, "I have been taking from the princess the dismal history of private life, and am almost discouraged from further search."

"It seems to me," said Imlac, "that, while you are making the choice of life, you neglect to live. You wander about a single city, which, however large and diversified, can now afford few novelties, and forget that you are in a country, famous among the earliest monarchies for the power and wisdom of its inhabitants; a country, where the sciences first dawned that illuminate the world, and beyond which

the arts cannot be traced of civil society or domestick life.

"The old Egyptians have left behind them monuments of industry and power, before which all European magnificence is confessed to fade away. The ruins of their architecture are the schools of modern builders; and, from the wonders which time has spared, we may conjecture, though uncertainly, what it has destroyed."

"My curiosity," said Rasselas, "does not very strongly lead me to survey piles of stone, or mounds of earth; my business is with man. I came hither not to measure fragments of temples, or trace choked aqueducts, but to look upon the various scenes of the present world."

"The things that are now before us," said the princess, "require attention, and deserve it. What have I to do with the heroes or the monuments of ancient times? with times which never can return, and heroes, whose form of life was different from all that the present condition of mankind requires or allows?"

"To know any thing," returned the poet, "we must know its effects; to see men, we must see their works, that we may learn what reason has dictated, or passion has incited, and find what are the most powerful motives of action. To judge rightly of the present we must oppose it to the past; for all judgment is comparative, and of the future nothing can be known. The truth is, that no mind is much employed upon the present: recollection and anticipa-

tion fill up almost all our moments. Our passions are joy and grief, love and hatred, hope and fear. Of joy and grief, the past is the object, and the future of hope and fear; even love and hatred respect the past, for the cause must have been before the effect.

"The present state of things is the consequence of the former, and it is natural to inquire, what were the sources of the good that we enjoy, or the evil that we suffer. If we act only for ourselves, to neglect the study of history is not prudent: if we are intrusted with the care of others, it is not just. Ignorance, when it is voluntary, is criminal; and he may properly be charged with evil, who refused to learn how he might prevent it.

"There is no part of history so generally useful, as that which relates the progress of the human mind, the gradual improvement of reason, the successive advances of science, the vicissitudes of learning and ignorance, which are the light and darkness of thinking beings, the extinction and resuscitation of arts, and the revolutions of the intellectual world. If accounts of battles and invasions are peculiarly the business of princes, the useful or elegant arts are not to be neglected; those who have kingdoms to govern, have understandings to cultivate.

"Example is always more efficacious than precept. A soldier is formed in war, and a painter must copy pictures. In this, contemplative life has the advantage: great actions are seldom seen, but the labours of art are always at hand, for those who desire to know what art has been able to perform.

Painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.

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"When the eye or the imagination is struck with an uncommon work, the next transition of an active mind is to the means by which it was performed. Here begins the true use of such contemplation; we enlarge our comprehension by new ideas, and, perhaps, recover some art lost to mankind, or learn what is less perfectly known in our own country. At least, we compare our own with former times, and either rejoice at our improvements, or, what is the first motion towards good, discover our defects."

"I am willing," said the prince, "to see all that can deserve my search." "And I," said the princess, "shall rejoice to learn something of the manners of antiquity."

"The most pompous monument of Egyptian greatness, and one of the most bulky works of manual industry," said Imlac, "are the pyramids; fabricks raised, before the time of history, and of which the earliest narratives afford us only uncertain traditions. Of these, the greatest is still standing, very little injured by time."

"Let us visit them to-morrow," said Nekayah. "I have often heard of the pyramids, and shall not rest, till I have seen them, within and without, with my own eyes."

Chapter XXXI

THEY VISIT THE PYRAMIDS

THE resolution being thus taken, they set out the next day. They laid tents upon their camels, being resolved to stay among the pyramids, till their

curiosity was fully satisfied. They travelled gently, turned aside to every thing remarkable, stopped, from time to time, and conversed with the inhabitants, and observed the various appearances of towns ruined and inhabited, of wild and cultivated nature.

When they came to the great pyramid, they were astonished at the extent of the base, and the height of the top. Imlac explained to them the principles upon which the pyramidal form was chosen for a fabrick, intended to coextend its duration with that of the world: he showed, that its gradual diminution gave it such stability, as defeated all the common attacks of the elements, and could scarcely be overthrown by earthquakes themselves, the least resistible of natural violence. A concussion that should shatter the pyramid, would threaten the dissolution of the continent.

They measured all its dimensions, and pitched their tents at its foot. Next day they prepared to enter its interiour apartments, and, having hired the common guides, climbed up to the first passage, when the favourite of the princess, looking into the cavity, stepped back and trembled. "Pekuah," said the princess, "of what art thou afraid?" "Of the narrow entrance," answered the lady, "and of the dreadful gloom. I dare not enter a place which must, surely, be inhabited by unquiet souls. The original possessours of these dreadful vaults will start up before us, and, perhaps, shut us in for ever[f]." She

[f] It may not be unacceptable to our readers, to quote, in this place, a stanza, from an Ode to Horror in the Student, ii. 313. It alludes to the

spoke, and threw her arms round the neck of her mistress.

"If all your fear be of apparitions," said the prince, "I will promise you safety: there is no danger from the dead; he that is once buried will be seen no more."

"That the dead are seen no more," said Imlac, "I will not undertake to maintain, against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages, and of all nations. There is no people, rude or learned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion, which perhaps, prevails, as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth: those that never heard of one another, would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but experience can make credible. That it is doubted by single cavillers, can very little weaken the general evidence; and some, who deny it with their tongues, confess it by their fears[8].

story of a French gentleman, who, going into the catacombs, not far from Cairo, with some Arab guides, was there robbed by them, and left; a huge stone being placed over the entrance.

What felt the Gallic traveller,
When far in Arab desert, drear,
He found within the catacomb,
Alive, the terrors of a tomb?
While many a mummy, through the shade,
In hieroglyphic stole arrayed,
Seem'd to uprear the mystic head,
And trace the gloom with ghostly tread;
Thou heard'st him pour the stifled groan,
Horror! his soul was all thy own! ED.

[8] See Hibbert's Philosophy of Apparitions. It is to be regretted, that Coleridge has never yet gratified the wish he professed to feel, in the first volume of his Friend, p. 246, to devote an entire work to the subject of dreams, visions, ghosts, witchcraft, &c.; in it we should have had the

"Yet I do not mean to add new terrours to those which have already seized upon Pekuah. There can be no reason, why spectres should haunt the pyramid more than other places, or why they should have power or will to hurt innocence and purity. Our entrance is no violation of their privileges; we can take nothing from them, how then can we offend them?"

"My dear Pekuah," said the princess, "I will always go before you, and Imlac shall follow you. Remember that you are the companion of the princess of Abissinia."

"If the princess is pleased that her servant should die," returned the lady, "let her command some death less dreadful than enclosure in this horrid cavern. You know, I dare not disobey you: I must go, if you command me; but, if I once enter, I never shall come back."

The princess saw that her fear was too strong for expostulation or reproof, and, embracing her, told her, that she should stay in the tent, till their return. Pekuah was yet not satisfied, but entreated the princess not to pursue so dreadful a purpose, as that of entering the recesses of the pyramid. "Though I cannot teach courage," said Nekayah, "I must not learn cowardice; nor leave, at last, undone what I came hither only to do."

satisfaction of tracing the workings of a most vivid imagination, analyzed by the most discriminating judgment. See Barrow's sermon on the being of God, proved from supernatural effects. We need scarcely request the reader to bear in mind, that Barrow was a mathematician, and one of the most severe of reasoners.— Ed.

Chapter XXXII

THEY ENTER THE PYRAMID

PEKUAH descended to the tents, and the rest entered the pyramid: they passed through the galleries, surveyed the vaults of marble, and examined the chest, in which the body of the founder is supposed to have been reposited. They then sat down in one of the most spacious chambers, to rest awhile before they attempted to return.

"We have now," said Imlac, "gratified our minds with an exact view of the greatest work of man, except the wall of China.

"Of the wall it is very easy to assign the motive. It secured a wealthy and timorous nation from the incursions of barbarians, whose unskilfulness in arts made it easier for them to supply their wants by rapine than by industry, and who, from time to time, poured in upon the habitations of peaceful commerce, as vultures descend upon domestick fowl. Their celerity and fierceness, made the wall necessary, and their ignorance made it efficacious.

"But, for the pyramids, no reason has ever been given adequate to the cost and labour of the work. The narrowness of the chambers proves that it could afford no retreat from enemies, and treasures might have been reposited, at far less expense, with equal security. It seems to have been erected only in compliance with that hunger of imagination, which preys incessantly upon life, and must be always appeased by some employment. Those who have

already all that they can enjoy, must enlarge their desires. He that has built for use, till use is supplied, must begin to build for vanity, and extend his plan to the utmost power of human performance, that he may not be soon reduced to form another wish.

"I consider this mighty structure, as a monument of the insufficiency of human enjoyments. A king, whose power is unlimited, and whose treasures surmount all real and imaginary wants, is compelled to solace, by the erection of a pyramid, the satiety of dominion and tastelessness of pleasures, and to amuse the tediousness of declining life, by seeing thousands labouring without end, and one stone, for no purpose, laid upon another. Whoever thou art, that, not content with a moderate condition, imaginest happiness in royal magnificence, and dreamest that command or riches can feed the appetite of novelty, with perpetual gratifications, survey the pyramids, and confess thy folly!"

Chapter XXXIII

THE PRINCESS MEETS WITH AN UNEXPECTED MISFORTUNE

THEY rose up, and returned through the cavity, at which they had entered, and the princess prepared for her favourite a long narrative of dark labyrinths, and costly rooms, and of the different impressions, which the varieties of the way had made upon her. But, when they came to their train, they found every one silent and dejected: the men

discovered shame and fear in their countenances, and the women were weeping in the tents.

What had happened they did not try to conjecture, but immediately inquired. "You had scarcely entered into the pyramid," said one of the attendants, "when a troop of Arabs rushed upon us; we were too few to resist them, and too slow to escape. They were about to search the tents, set us on our camels, and drive us along before them, when the approach of some Turkish horsemen put them to flight; but they seized the lady Pekuah with her two maids, and carried them away: the Turks are now pursuing them by our instigation, but, I fear, they will not be able to overtake them."

The princess was overpowered with surprise and grief. Rasselas, in the first heat of his resentment, ordered his servants to follow him, and prepared to pursue the robbers with his sabre in his hand. "Sir," said Imlac, "what can you hope from violence or valour? the Arabs are mounted on horses trained to battle and retreat; we have only beasts of burden. By leaving our present station we may lose the princess, but cannot hope to regain Pekuah."

In a short time, the Turks returned, having not been able to reach the enemy. The princess burst out into new lamentations, and Rasselas could scarcely forbear to reproach them with cowardice; but Imlac was of opinion, that the escape of the Arabs was no addition to their misfortune, for, perhaps, they would have killed their captives, rather than have resigned them.

Chapter XXXIV

THEY RETURN TO CAIRO WITHOUT PEKUAH

THERE was nothing to be hoped from longer stay. They returned to Cairo, repenting of their curiosity, censuring the negligence of the government, lamenting their own rashness, which had neglected to procure a guard, imagining many expedients, by which the loss of Pekuah might have been prevented, and resolving to do something for her recovery, though none could find any thing proper to be done.

Nekayah retired to her chamber, where her women attempted to comfort her, by telling her, that all had their troubles, and that lady Pekuah had enjoyed much happiness in the world, for a long time, and might reasonably expect a change of fortune. They hoped, that some good would befall her, wheresoever she was, and that their mistress would find another friend, who might supply her place.

The princess made them no answer, and they continued the form of condolence, not much grieved in their hearts that the favourite was lost.

Next day the prince presented, to the bassa, a memorial of the wrong which he had suffered, and a petition for redress. The bassa threatened to punish the robbers, but did not attempt to catch them, nor, indeed, could any account or description be given, by which he might direct the pursuit.

It soon appeared, that nothing would be done by authority. Governours, being accustomed to hear of

more crimes than they can punish, and more wrongs than they can redress, set themselves at ease by indiscriminate negligence, and presently forget the request, when they lose sight of the petitioner.

Imlac then endeavoured to gain some intelligence by private agents. He found many who pretended to an exact knowledge of all the haunts of the Arabs, and to regular correspondence with their chiefs, and who readily undertook the recovery of Pekuah. Of these, some were furnished with money for their journey, and came back no more; some were liberally paid for accounts which a few days discovered to be false. But the princess would not suffer any means, however improbable, to be left untried. While she was doing something, she kept her hope alive. As one expedient failed, another was suggested; when one messenger returned unsuccessful, another was despatched to a different quarter.

Two months had now passed, and of Pekuah nothing had been heard; the hopes, which they had endeavoured to raise in each other, grew more languid, and the princess, when she saw nothing more to be tried, sunk down inconsolable in hopeless dejection. A thousand times she reproached herself with the easy compliance, by which she permitted her favourite to stay behind her. "Had not my fondness," said she, "lessened my authority, Pekuah had not dared to talk of her terrours. She ought to have feared me more than spectres. A severe look would have overpowered her; a peremptory command would have compelled obedience. Why did

foolish indulgence prevail upon me? Why did I not speak, and refuse to hear?''

''Great princess,'' said Imlac, ''do not reproach yourself for your virtue, or consider that as blamable by which evil has accidentally been caused. Your tenderness for the timidity of Pekuah was generous and kind. When we act according to our duty, we commit the event to him, by whose laws our actions are governed, and who will suffer none to be finally punished for obedience. When, in prospect of some good, whether natural or moral, we break the rules prescribed us, we withdraw from the direction of superiour wisdom, and take all consequences upon ourselves. Man cannot so far know the connexion of causes and events, as that he may venture to do wrong, in order to do right. When we pursue our end by lawful means, we may always console our miscarriage by the hope of future recompense. When we consult only our own policy, and attempt to find a nearer way to good, by overleaping the settled boundaries of right and wrong, we cannot be happy even by success, because we cannot escape the consciousness of our fault; but, if we miscarry, the disappointment is irremediably imbittered. How comfortless is the sorrow of him, who feels, at once, the pangs of guilt, and the vexation of calamity, which guilt has brought upon him?

''Consider, princess, what would have been your condition, if the lady Pekuah had entreated to accompany you, and, being compelled to stay in the tents, had been carried away; or how would you

have borne the thought, if you had forced her into the pyramid, and she had died before you in agonies of terrour?''

''Had either happened,'' said Nekayah, ''I could not have endured life till now: I should have been tortured to madness by the remembrance of such cruelty, or must have pined away in abhorrence of myself.''

''This, at least,'' said Imlac, ''is the present reward of virtuous conduct, that no unlucky consequence can oblige us to repent it.''

Chapter XXXV

THE PRINCESS LANGUISHES FOR WANT OF PEKUAH

NEKAYAH, being thus reconciled to herself, found, that no evil is insupportable, but that which is accompanied with consciousness of wrong. She was, from that time, delivered from the violence of tempestuous sorrow, and sunk into silent pensiveness and gloomy tranquillity. She sat, from morning to evening, recollecting all that had been done or said by her Pekuah; treasured up, with care, every trifle on which Pekuah had set an accidental value, and which might recall to mind any little incident or careless conversation. The sentiments of her, whom she now expected to see no more, were treasured in her memory as rules of life, and she deliberated to no other end, than to conjecture, on any occasion, what would have been the opinion and counsel of Pekuah.

The women, by whom she was attended, knew nothing of her real condition, and, therefore, she could not talk to them, but with caution and reserve. She began to remit her curiosity, having no great care to collect notions which she had no convenience of uttering. Rasselas endeavoured first to comfort, and afterwards to divert her; he hired musicians, to whom she seemed to listen, but did not hear them, and procured masters, to instruct her in various arts, whose lectures, when they visited her again, were again to be repeated. She had lost her taste of pleasure, and her ambition of excellence. And her mind, though forced into short excursions, always recurred to the image of her friend.

Imlac was, every morning, earnestly enjoined to renew his inquiries, and was asked, every night, whether he had yet heard of Pekuah, till, not being able to return the princess the answer that she desired, he was less and less willing to come into her presence. She observed his backwardness, and commanded him to attend her. "You are not," said she, "to confound impatience with resentment, or to suppose, that I charge you with negligence, because I repine at your unsuccessfulness. I do not much wonder at your absence; I know that the unhappy are never pleasing, and that all naturally avoid the contagion of misery. To hear complaints is wearisome alike to the wretched and the happy; for who would cloud, by adventitious grief, the short gleams of gaiety which life allows us? or who, that is struggling under his own evils, will add to them the miseries of another?

"The time is at hand, when none shall be disturbed any longer by the sighs of Nekayah: my search after happiness is now at an end. I am resolved to retire from the world, with all its flatteries and deceits, and will hide myself in solitude, without any other care than to compose my thoughts, and regulate my hours by a constant succession of innocent occupations, till, with a mind purified from all earthly desires, I shall enter into that state, to which all are hastening, and in which I hope again to enjoy the friendship of Pekuah."

"Do not entangle your mind," said Imlac, "by irrevocable determinations, nor increase the burden of life by a voluntary accumulation of misery: the weariness of retirement will continue or increase, when the loss of Pekuah is forgotten. That you have been deprived of one pleasure, is no very good reason for rejection of the rest."

"Since Pekuah was taken from me," said the princess, "I have no pleasure to reject or to retain. She that has no one to love or trust has little to hope. She wants the radical principle of happiness. We may, perhaps, allow that what satisfaction this world can afford, must arise from the conjunction of wealth, knowledge, and goodness. Wealth is nothing, but as it is bestowed, and knowledge nothing, but as it is communicated: they must, therefore, be imparted to others, and to whom could I now delight to impart them? Goodness affords the only comfort, which can be enjoyed without a partner, and goodness may be practised in retirement."

"How far solitude may admit goodness, or advance it, I shall not," replied Imlac, "dispute at present. Remember the confession of the pious hermit. You will wish to return into the world, when the image of your companion has left your thoughts." "That time," said Nekayah, "will never come. The generous frankness, the modest obsequiousness, and the faithful secrecy of my dear Pekuah, will always be more missed, as I shall live longer to see vice and folly."

"The state of a mind, oppressed with a sudden calamity," said Imlac, "is like that of the fabulous inhabitants of the new-created earth, who, when the first night came upon them, supposed that day would never return. When the clouds of sorrow gather over us, we see nothing beyond them, nor can imagine how they will be dispelled; yet a new day succeeded to the night, and sorrow is never long without a dawn of ease. But they who restrain themselves from receiving comfort, do as the savages would have done, had they put out their eyes when it was dark. Our minds, like our bodies, are in continual flux; something is hourly lost, and something acquired. To lose much, at once, is inconvenient to either, but, while the vital powers remain uninjured, nature will find the means of reparation. Distance has the same effect on the mind, as on the eye, and, while we glide along the stream of time, whatever we leave behind us, is always lessening, and that which we approach increasing in magnitude. Do not suffer life to stagnate; it will grow muddy for want

of motion: commit yourself again to the current of the world; Pekuah will vanish by degrees; you will meet, in your way, some other favourite, or learn to diffuse yourself in general conversation."

"At least," said the prince, "do not despair before all remedies have been tried; the inquiry after the unfortunate lady is still continued, and shall be carried on with yet greater diligence, on condition that you will promise to wait a year for the event, without any unalterable resolution."

Nekayah thought this a reasonable demand, and made the promise to her brother, who had been advised, by Imlac, to require it. Imlac had, indeed, no great hope of regaining Pekuah, but he supposed, that, if he could secure the interval of a year, the princess would be then in no danger of a cloister.

Chapter XXXVI

PEKUAH IS STILL REMEMBERED. THE PROGRESS OF SORROW

NEKAYAH, seeing that nothing was omitted for the recovery of her favourite, and having, by her promise, set her intention of retirement at a distance, began, imperceptibly, to return to common cares, and common pleasures. She rejoiced, without her own consent, at the suspension of her sorrows, and sometimes caught herself, with indignation, in the act of turning away her mind from the remembrance of her, whom yet she resolved never to forget.

She then appointed a certain hour of the day for meditation on the merits and fondness of Pekuah, and, for some weeks, retired constantly, at the time fixed, and returned with her eyes swollen, and her countenance clouded. By degrees, she grew less scrupulous, and suffered any important and pressing avocation to delay the tribute of daily tears. She then yielded to less occasions; sometimes forgot what she was, indeed, afraid to remember, and, at last, wholly released herself from the duty of periodical affliction.

Her real love of Pekuah was yet not diminished. A thousand occurrences brought her back to memory, and a thousand wants, which nothing but the confidence of friendship can supply, made her frequently regretted. She, therefore, solicited Imlac never to desist from inquiry, and to leave no art of intelligence untried, that, at least, she might have the comfort of knowing, that she did not suffer by negligence or sluggishness. "Yet, what," said she, "is to be expected from our pursuit of happiness, when we find the state of life to be such, that happiness itself is the cause of misery? Why should we endeavour to attain that, of which the possession cannot be secured? I shall, henceforward, fear to yield my heart to excellence, however bright, or to fondness, however tender, lest I should lose again what I have lost in Pekuah."

Chapter XXXVII

THE PRINCESS HEARS NEWS OF PEKUAH

IN seven months, one of the messengers, who had been sent away, upon the day when the promise was drawn from the princess, returned, after many unsuccessful rambles, from the borders of Nubia, with an account that Pekuah was in the hands of an Arab chief, who possessed a castle, or fortress, on the extremity of Egypt. The Arab, whose revenue was plunder, was willing to restore her, with her two attendants, for two hundred ounces of gold.

The price was no subject of debate. The princess was in ecstasies when she heard that her favourite was alive, and might so cheaply be ransomed. She could not think of delaying, for a moment, Pekuah's happiness or her own, but entreated her brother to send back the messenger with the sum required. Imlac, being consulted, was not very confident of the veracity of the relater, and was still more doubtful of the Arab's faith, who might, if he were too liberally trusted, detain, at once, the money and the captives. He thought it dangerous to put themselves in the power of the Arab, by going into his district, and could not expect that the rover would so much expose himself as to come into the lower country, where he might be seized by the forces of the bassa.

It is difficult to negotiate where neither will trust. But Imlac, after some deliberation, directed the messenger to propose, that Pekuah should be conducted, by ten horsemen, to the monastery of St. Anthony,

which is situated in the deserts of upper Egypt, where she should be met by the same number, and her ransome should be paid.

That no time might be lost, as they expected that the proposal would not be refused, they immediately began their journey to the monastery; and, when they arrived, Imlac went forward with the former messenger to the Arab's fortress. Rasselas was desirous to go with them; but neither his sister nor Imlac would consent. The Arab, according to the custom of his nation, observed the laws of hospitality, with great exactness, to those who put themselves into his power, and, in a few days, brought Pekuah, with her maids, by easy journeys, to the place appointed, where, receiving the stipulated price, he restored her, with great respect, to liberty and her friends, and undertook to conduct them back towards Cairo, beyond all danger of robbery or violence.

The princess and her favourite embraced each other with transport, too violent to be expressed, and went out together to pour the tears of tenderness in secret, and exchange professions of kindness and gratitude. After a few hours, they returned into the refectory of the convent, where, in the presence of the prior and his brethren, the prince required of Pekuah the history of her adventures.

Chapter XXXVIII

THE ADVENTURES OF THE LADY PEKUAH

"AT what time, and in what manner I was forced away," said Pekuah, "your servants have told you. The suddenness of the event struck me with surprise, and I was, at first, rather stupified, than agitated with any passion of either fear or sorrow. My confusion was increased by the speed and tumult of our flight, while we were followed by the Turks, who, as it seemed, soon despaired to overtake us, or were afraid of those whom they made a show of menacing.

"When the Arabs saw themselves out of danger, they slackened their course, and, as I was less harassed by external violence, I began to feel more uneasiness in my mind. After some time, we stopped near a spring, shaded with trees, in a pleasant meadow, where we were set upon the ground, and offered such refreshments, as our masters were partaking. I was suffered to sit, with my maids, apart from the rest, and none attempted to comfort or insult us. Here I first began to feel the full weight of my misery. The girls sat weeping in silence, and, from time to time, looked on me for succour. I knew not to what condition we were doomed, nor could conjecture where would be the place of our captivity, or whence to draw any hope of deliverance. I was in the hands of robbers and savages, and had no reason to suppose, that their pity was more than their justice, or that they would forbear the

gratification of any ardour of desire, or caprice of cruelty. I, however, kissed my maids, and endeavoured to pacify them, by remarking, that we were yet treated with decency, and that, since we were now carried beyond pursuit, there was no danger of violence to our lives.

"When we were to be set again on horseback, my maids clung round me, and refused to be parted, but I commanded them not to irritate those who had us in their power. We travelled, the remaining part of the day, through an unfrequented and pathless country, and came, by moonlight, to the side of a hill, where the rest of the troop was stationed. Their tents were pitched, and their fires kindled, and our chief was welcomed, as a man much beloved by his dependants.

"We were received into a large tent, where we found women, who had attended their husbands in the expidition. They set before us the supper, which they had provided, and I ate rather to encourage my maids than to comply with any appetite of my own. When the meat was taken away, they spread the carpets for repose. I was weary, and hoped to find, in sleep, that remission of distress which nature seldom denies. Ordering myself, therefore, to be undressed, I observed that the women looked very earnestly upon me, not expecting, I suppose, to see me so submissively attended. When my upper vest was taken off, they were, apparently, struck with the splendour of my clothes, and one of them timorously laid her hand upon the embroidery. She then

went out, and, in a short time, came back with another woman, who seemed to be of higher rank and greater authority. She did, at her entrance, the usual act of reverence, and, taking me by the hand, placed me in a smaller tent, spread with finer carpets, where I spent the night quietly with my maids.

"In the morning, as I was sitting on the grass, the chief of the troop came towards me. I rose up to receive him, and he bowed with great respect. 'Illustrious lady,' said he, 'my fortune is better than I had presumed to hope; I am told, by my women, that I have a princess in my camp.' 'Sir,' answered I, 'your women have deceived themselves and you; I am not a princess, but an unhappy stranger, who intended soon to have left this country, in which I am now to be imprisoned for ever.' 'Whoever, or whencesoever, you are,' returned the Arab, 'your dress, and that of your servants, show your rank to be high, and your wealth to be great. Why should you, who can so easily procure your ransome, think yourself in danger of perpetual captivity? The purpose of my incursions is to increase my riches, or, more properly, to gather tribute. The sons of Ishmael are the natural and hereditary lords of this part of the continent, which is usurped by late invaders, and low-born tyrants, from whom we are compelled to take, by the sword, what is denied to justice. The violence of war admits no distinction: the lance that is lifted at guilt and power, will, sometimes, fall on innocence and gentleness.'

"'How little,' said I, 'did I expect that yesterday it should have fallen upon me!'

"'Misfortunes,' answered the Arab, 'should always be expected. If the eye of hostility could learn reverence or pity, excellence, like yours, had been exempt from injury. But the angels of affliction spread their toils alike for the virtuous and the wicked, for the mighty and the mean. Do not be disconsolate: I am not one of the lawless and cruel rovers of the desert; I know the rules of civil life: I will fix your ransome, give a passport to your messenger, and perform my stipulation, with nice punctuality.'

"You will easily believe, that I was pleased with his courtesy: and, finding, that his predominant passion was desire of money, I began now to think my danger less, for I knew that no sum would be thought too great for the release of Pekuah. I told him, that he should have no reason to charge me with ingratitude, if I was used with kindness, and that any ransome, which could be expected for a maid of common rank, would be paid; but that he must not persist to rate me as a princess. He said he would consider what he should demand, and then, smiling, bowed and retired.

"Soon after the women came about me, each contending to be more officious than the other, and my maids, themselves, were served with reverence. We travelled onwards by short journeys. On the fourth day the chief told me, that my ransome must be two hundred ounces of gold; which I not only

promised him, but told him, that I would add fifty more, if I and my maids were honourably treated.

"I never knew the power of gold before. From that time, I was the leader of the troop. The march of every day was longer, or shorter, as I commanded, and the tents were pitched where I chose to rest. We now had camels, and other conveniencies for travel; my own women were always at my side, and I amused myself with observing the manners of the vagrant nations, and with viewing remains of ancient edifices, with which these deserted countries appear to have been, in some distant age, lavishly embellished.

"The chief of the band was a man far from illiterate: he was able to travel by the stars, or the compass, and had marked, in his erratick expeditions, such places as are most worthy the notice of a passenger. He observed to me, that buildings are always best preserved in places little frequented, and difficult of access: for, when once a country declines from its primitive splendour, the more inhabitants are left, the quicker ruin will be made. Walls supply stones more easily than quarries, and palaces and temples will be demolished, to make stables of granite, and cottages of porphyry.

Chapter XXXIX

THE ADVENTURES OF PEKUAH CONTINUED

"WE wandered about, in this manner, for some weeks, whether, as our chief pretended, for my gratification, or, as I rather suspected, for some convenience of his own. I endeavoured to appear contented, where sullenness and resentment would have been of no use, and that endeavour conduced much to the calmness of my mind; but my heart was always with Nekayah, and the troubles of the night much overbalanced the amusements of the day. My women, who threw all their cares upon their mistress, set their minds at ease, from the time when they saw me treated with respect, and gave themselves up to the incidental alleviations of our fatigue, without solicitude or sorrow. I was pleased with their pleasure, and animated with their confidence. My condition had lost much of its terrour, since I found that the Arab ranged the country merely to get riches. Avarice is an uniform and tractable vice: other intellectual distempers are different in different constitutions of mind; that which sooths the pride of one, will offend the pride of another; but to the favour of the covetous, there is a ready way: bring money, and nothing is denied.

"At last we came to the dwelling of our chief, a strong and spacious house, built with stone, in an island of the Nile, which lies, as I was told, under the tropick. 'Lady,' said the Arab, 'you shall rest, after your journey, a few weeks, in this place, where

you are to consider yourself as sovereign. My occupation is war; I have, therefore, chosen this obscure residence, from which I can issue unexpected, and to which I can retire unpursued. You may now repose in security: here are few pleasures, but here is no danger.' He then led me into the inner apartments, and seating me on the richest couch, bowed to the ground. His women, who considered me as a rival, looked on me with malignity; but, being soon informed that I was a great lady, detained only for my ransome, they began to vie with each other in obsequiousness and reverence.

"Being again comforted with new assurances of speedy liberty, I was, for some days, diverted from impatience by the novelty of the place. The turrets overlooked the country to a great distance, and afforded a view of many windings of the stream. In the day, I wandered from one place to another, as the course of the sun varied the splendour of the prospect, and saw many things which I had never seen before. The crocodiles and river-horses, are common in this unpeopled region, and I often looked upon them with terrour, though I knew that they could not hurt me. For some time I expected to see mermaids and tritons, which, as Imlac has told me, the European travellers have stationed in the Nile, but no such beings ever appeared, and the Arab, when I inquired after them, laughed at my credulity.

"At night the Arab always attended me to a tower, set apart for celestial observations, where he endeavoured to teach me the names and courses of

the stars. I had no great inclination to this study, but an appearance of attention was necessary to please my instructer, who valued himself for his skill; and, in a little while, I found some employment requisite to beguile the tediousness of time, which was to be passed always amidst the same objects. I was weary of looking in the morning, on things from which I had turned away weary in the evening. I, therefore, was, at last, willing to observe the stars, rather than do nothing, but could not always compose my thoughts, and was very often thinking on Nekayah, when others imagined me contemplating the sky. Soon after the Arab went upon another expedition, and then my only pleasure was to talk with my maids, about the accident by which we were carried away, and the happiness that we should all enjoy at the end of our captivity."

"There were women in your Arab's fortress," said the princess, "why did you not make them your companions, enjoy their conversation, and partake their diversions? In a place, where they found business or amusement, why should you alone sit corroded with idle melancholy? or, why could not you bear, for a few months, that condition to which they were condemned for life?"

"The diversions of the women," answered Pekuah, "were only childish play, by which the mind, accustomed to stronger operations, could not be kept busy. I could do all which they delighted in doing by powers merely sensitive, while my intellectual faculties were flown to Cairo. They ran, from room to

room, as a bird hops, from wire to wire, in his cage. They danced for the sake of motion, as lambs frisk in a meadow. One sometimes pretended to be hurt, that the rest might be alarmed; or hid herself, that another might seek her. Part of their time passed in watching the progress of light bodies, that floated on the river, and part, in marking the various forms into which clouds broke in the sky.

"Their business was only needlework in which I and my maids, sometimes helped them; but you know that the mind will easily straggle from the fingers, nor will you suspect that captivity and absence from Nekayah could receive solace from silken flowers.

"Nor was much satisfaction to be hoped from their conversation: for of what could they be expected to talk? They had seen nothing; for they had lived, from early youth, in that narrow spot: of what they had not seen they could have no knowledge, for they could not read. They had no ideas but of the few things that were within their view, and had hardly names for any thing but their clothes and their food. As I bore a superiour character, I was often called to terminate their quarrels, which I decided as equitably as I could. If it could have amused me to hear the complaints of each against the rest, I might have been often detained by long stories; but the motives of their animosity were so small, that I could not listen without intercepting the tale."

"How," said Rasselas, "can the Arab, whom you represented as a man of more than common

accomplishments, take any pleasure in his seraglio, when it is filled only with women like these? Are they exquisitely beautiful?"

"They do not," said Pekuah, "want that unaffecting and ignoble beauty, which may subsist without sprightliness or sublimity, without energy of thought, or dignity of virtue. But to a man, like the Arab, such beauty was only a flower, casually plucked, and carelessly thrown away. Whatever pleasures he might find among them, they were not those of friendship or society. When they were playing about him, he looked on them with inattentive superiority: when they vied for his regard, he sometimes turned away disgusted. As they had no knowledge, their talk could take nothing from the tediousness of life; as they had no choice, their fondness, or appearance of fondness, excited in him neither pride nor gratitude; he was not exalted in his own esteem by the smiles of a woman, who saw no other man, nor was much obliged by that regard, of which he could never know the sincerity, and which he might often perceive to be exerted, not so much to delight him, as to pain a rival. That which he gave, and they received, as love, was only a careless distribution of superfluous time, such love as man can bestow upon that which he despises, such as has neither hope nor fear, neither joy nor sorrow."

"You have reason, lady, to think yourself happy," said Imlac, "that you have been thus easily dismissed. How could a mind, hungry for knowledge,

be willing, in an intellectual famine, to lose such a banquet as Pekuah's conversation?"

"I am inclined to believe," answered Pekuah, "that he was, for sometime, in suspense; for, notwithstanding his promise, whenever I proposed to despatch a messenger to Cairo, he found some excuse for delay. While I was detained in his house, he made many incursions into the neighboring countries, and, perhaps, he would have refused to discharge me, had his plunder been equal to his wishes. He returned always courteous, related his adventures, delighted to hear my observations, and endeavoured to advance my acquaintance with the stars. When I importuned him to send away my letters, he soothed me with professions of honour and sincerity; and, when I could be no longer decently denied, put his troop again in motion, and left me to govern in his absence. I was much afflicted by this studied procrastination, and was sometimes afraid, that I should be forgotten; that you would leave Cairo, and I must end my days in an island of the Nile.

"I grew, at last, hopeless and dejected, and cared so little to entertain him, that he, for awhile, more frequently talked with my maids. That he should fall in love with them, or with me, might have been equally fatal, and I was not much pleased with the growing friendship. My anxiety was not long; for, as I recovered some degree of cheerfulness, he returned to me, and I could not forbear to despise my former uneasiness.

"He still delayed to send for my ransome, and would, perhaps, never have determined, had not your agent found his way to him. The gold, which he would not fetch, he could not reject, when it was offered. He hastened to prepare for our journey hither, like a man delivered from the pain of an intestine conflict. I took leave of my companions in the house, who dismissed me with cold indifference."

Nekayah, having heard her favourite's relation, rose and embraced her, and Rasselas gave her a hundred ounces of gold, which she presented to the Arab for the fifty that were promised.

Chapter XL

THE HISTORY OF A MAN OF LEARNING

THEY returned to Cairo, and were so well pleased at finding themselves together, that none of them went much abroad. The prince began to love learning, and, one day, declared to Imlac, that he intended to devote himself to science, and pass the rest of his days in literary solitude.

"Before you make your final choice," answered Imlac, "you ought to examine its hazards, and converse with some of those who are grown old in the company of themselves. I have just left the observatory of one of the most learned astronomers in the world, who has spent forty years in unwearied attention to the motions and appearances of the celestial bodies, and has drawn out his soul in endless calculations. He admits a few friends, once a month, to hear his deductions, and enjoy his discoveries. I was

introduced, as a man of knowledge worthy of his notice. Men of various ideas, and fluent conversation, are commonly welcome to those whose thoughts have been long fixed upon a single point, and who find the images of other things stealing away. I delighted him with my remarks; he smiled at the narrative of my travels, and was glad to forget the constellations, and descend, for a moment, into the lower world.

"On the next day of vacation I renewed my visit, and was so fortunate as to please him again. He relaxed, from that time, the severity of his rule, and permitted me to enter at my own choice. I found him always busy, and always glad to be relieved. As each knew much which the other was desirous of learning, we exchanged our notions with great delight. I perceived that I had, every day, more of his confidence, and always found new cause of admiration in the profundity of his mind. His comprehension is vast, his memory capacious and retentive, his discourse is methodical, and his expression clear.

"His integrity and benevolence are equal to his learning. His deepest researches, and most favourite studies, are willingly interrupted for any opportunity of doing good, by his counsel or his riches. To his closest retreat, at his most busy moments, all are admitted that want his assistance: 'For, though I exclude idleness and pleasure, I will never,' says he, 'bar my doors against charity. To man is permitted the contemplation of the skies, but the practice of virtue is commanded.'"

"Surely," said the princess, "this man is happy."

"I visited him," said Imlac, "with more and more frequency, and was every time more enamoured of his conversation: he was sublime without haughtiness, courteous without formality, and communicative without ostentation. I was, at first, great princess, of your opinion; thought him the happiest of mankind; and often congratulated him on the blessing that he enjoyed. He seemed to hear nothing with indifference but the praises of his condition, to which he always returned a general answer, and diverted the conversation to some other topick.

"Amidst this willingness to be pleased, and labour to please, I had, quickly, reason to imagine, that some painful sentiment pressed upon his mind. He often looked up earnestly towards the sun, and let his voice fall in the midst of his discourse. He would sometimes, when we were alone, gaze upon me, in silence, with the air of a man, who longed to speak what he was yet resolved to suppress. He would often send for me, with vehement injunctions of haste, though, when I came to him, he had nothing extraordinary to say. And sometimes, when I was leaving him, would call me back, pause a few moments, and then dismiss me."

Chapter XLI

THE ASTRONOMER DISCOVERS THE CAUSE OF HIS UNEASINESS

"AT last the time came, when the secret burst his reserve. We were sitting together, last night, in the turret of his house, watching the emersion of a satellite of Jupiter. A sudden tempest clouded the sky, and disappointed our observation. We sat awhile silent in the dark, and then he addressed himself to me in these words: 'Imlac, I have long considered thy friendship as the greatest blessing of my life. Integrity, without knowledge, is weak and useless; and knowledge, without integrity, is dangerous and dreadful. I have found in thee all the qualities requisite for trust—benevolence, experience, and fortitude. I have long discharged an office, which I must soon quit at the call of nature, and shall rejoice, in the hour of imbecility and pain, to devolve it upon thee.'

"I thought myself honoured by this testimony, and protested, that whatever could conduce to his happiness, would add likewise to mine.

"'Hear, Imlac, what thou wilt not, without difficulty, credit. I have possessed, for five years, the regulation of weather, and the distribution of the seasons: the sun has listened to my dictates, and passed, from tropick to tropick, by my direction; the clouds, at my call, have poured their waters, and the Nile has overflowed at my command; I have restrained the rage of the dog-star, and mitigated

the fervours of the crab. The winds alone, of all the elemental powers, have, hitherto, refused my authority, and multitudes have perished by equinoctial tempests, which I found myself unable to prohibit or restrain. I have administered this great office with exact justice, and made, to the different nations of the earth, an impartial dividend of rain and sunshine. What must have been the misery of half the globe, if I had limited the clouds to particular regions, or confined the sun to either side of the equator!'

Chapter XLII

THE OPINION OF THE ASTRONOMER IS EXPLAINED AND JUSTIFIED

"I SUPPOSE he discovered in me, through the obscurity of the room, some tokens of amazement and doubt, for, after a short pause, he proceeded thus:

"'Not to be easily credited will neither surprise nor offend me; for I am, probably, the first of human beings to whom this trust has been imparted. Nor do I know whether to deem this distinction a reward or punishment; since I have possessed it, I have been far less happy than before, and nothing but the consciousness of good intention could have enabled me to support the weariness of unremitted vigilance.'

"How long, sir," said I, "has this great office been in your hands?

"'About ten years ago,' said he, 'my daily obser-

vations of the changes of the sky, led me to consider, whether, if I had the power of the seasons, I could confer greater plenty upon the inhabitants of the earth. This contemplation fastened on my mind, and I sat, days and nights, in imaginary dominion, pouring, upon this country and that, the showers of fertility, and seconding every fall of rain with a due proportion of sunshine. I had yet only the will to do good, and did not imagine that I should ever have the power.

"'One day, as I was looking on the fields withering with heat, I felt, in my mind, a sudden wish that I could send rain on the southern mountains, and raise the Nile to an inundation. In the hurry of my imagination, I commanded rain to fall, and, by comparing the time of my command with that of the inundation, I found, that the clouds had listened to my lips.'

"Might not some other cause," said I, "produce this concurrence? the Nile does not always rise on the same day.

"'Do not believe,' said he, with impatience, 'that such objections could escape me: I reasoned long against my own conviction, and laboured against truth with the utmost obstinacy. I sometimes suspected myself of madness, and should not have dared to impart this secret, but to a man like you, capable of distinguishing the wonderful from the impossible, and the incredible from the false.'

"Why, sir," said I, "do you call that incredible, which you know, or think you know, to be true?

"'Because,' said he, 'I cannot prove it by any external evidence; and I know, too well, the laws of demonstration, to think that my conviction ought to influence another, who cannot, like me, be conscious of its force. I, therefore, shall not attempt to gain credit by disputation. It is sufficient, that I feel this power, that I have long possessed, and every day exerted it. But the life of man is short, the infirmities of age increase upon me, and the time will soon come, when the regulator of the year must mingle with the dust. The care of appointing a successour has long disturbed me; the night and the day have been spent in comparisons of all the characters which have come to my knowledge, and I have yet found none so worthy as thyself.'

Chapter XLIII

THE ASTRONOMER LEAVES IMLAC HIS DIRECTIONS

"'HEAR, therefore, what I shall impart, with attention, such as the welfare of the world requires. If the task of a king be considered as difficult, who has the care only of a few millions, to whom he cannot do much good or harm, what must be the anxiety of him, on whom depends the action of the elements, and the great gifts of light and heat!—Hear me, therefore, with attention.

"'I have diligently considered the position of the earth and sun, and formed innumerable schemes, in which I changed their situation. I have sometimes turned aside the axis of the earth, and sometimes varied the ecliptick of the sun: but I have found it

impossible to make a disposition, by which the world may be advantaged; what one region gains, another loses by an imaginable alteration, even without considering the distant parts of the solar system, with which we are unacquainted. Do not, therefore, in thy administration of the year, indulge thy pride by innovation; do not please thyself with thinking, that thou canst make thyself renowned to all future ages, by disordering the seasons. The memory of mischief is no desirable fame. Much less will it become thee to let kindness or interest prevail. Never rob other countries of rain to pour it on thine own. For us the Nile is sufficient.'

"I promised, that when I possessed the power, I would use it with inflexible integrity; and he dismissed me, pressing my hand. 'My heart,' said he, 'will be now at rest, and my benevolence will no more destroy my quiet: I have found a man of wisdom and virtue, to whom I can cheerfully bequeath the inheritance of the sun.'"

The prince heard this narration with very serious regard; but the princess smiled, and Pekuah convulsed herself with laughter. "Ladies," said Imlac, "to mock the heaviest of human afflictions, is neither charitable nor wise. Few can attain this man's knowledge, and few practise his virtues; but all may suffer his calamity. Of the uncertainties of our present state, the most dreadful and alarming is the uncertain continuance of reason."

The princess was recollected, and the favourite was abashed. Rasselas, more deeply affected, in-

quired of Imlac, whether he thought such maladies of the mind frequent, and how they were contracted.

Chapter XLIV

THE DANGEROUS PREVALENCE OF IMAGINATION

"DISORDERS of intellect," answered Imlac, "happen much more often than superficial observers will easily believe. Perhaps, if we speak with rigorous exactness, no human mind is in its right state[h]. There is no man, whose imagination does not, sometimes, predominate over his reason, who can regulate his attention wholly by his will, and whose ideas will come and go at his command. No man will be found, in whose mind airy notions do not, sometimes, tyrannize, and force him to hope or fear beyond the limits of sober probability. All power of fancy over reason, is a degree of insanity; but, while this power is such as we can control and repress, it is not visible to others, nor considered as any depravation of the mental faculties: it is not pronounced madness, but when it becomes ungovernable, and apparently influences speech or action.

"To indulge the power of fiction, and send imagination out upon the wing, is often the sport of those who delight too much in silent speculation. When we are alone we are not always busy; the labour of excogitation is too violent to last long;

[h] See Traité Médico-philosophique sur l'Aliénation Mentale, par Pinel. Dr. Willis defined, in remarkable accordance with this case in Rasselas, insanity to be the tendency of a mind to cherish one idea, or one set of ideas, to the exclusion of others.— Ed.

the ardour of inquiry will, sometimes, give way to idleness or satiety. He who has nothing external that can divert him, must find pleasure in his own thoughts, and must conceive himself what he is not; for who is pleased with what he is? He then expatiates in boundless futurity, and culls, from all imaginable conditions, that which, for the present moment, he should most desire; amuses his desires with impossible enjoyments, and confers upon his pride unattainable dominion. The mind dances from scene to scene, unites all pleasures in all combinations, and riots in delights, which nature and fortune, with all their bounty, cannot bestow.

"In time, some particular train of ideas fixes the attention; all other intellectual gratifications are rejected; the mind, in weariness or leisure, recurs constantly to the favourite conception, and feasts on the luscious falsehood, whenever she is offended with the bitterness of truth. By degrees, the reign of fancy is confirmed; she grows first imperious, and in time despotick. Then fictions begin to operate as realities, false opinions fasten upon the mind, and life passes in dreams of rapture or of anguish.

"This, sir, is one of the dangers of solitude, which the hermit has confessed not always to promote goodness, and the astronomer's misery has proved to be not always propitious to wisdom."

"I will no more," said the favourite, "imagine myself the queen of Abissinia. I have often spent the hours, which the princess gave to my own disposal, in adjusting ceremonies, and regulating the court;

I have repressed the pride of the powerful, and granted the petitions of the poor; I have built new palaces in more happy situations, planted groves upon the tops of mountains, and have exulted in the beneficence of royalty, till, when the princess entered, I had almost forgotten to bow down before her."

"And I," said the princess, "will not allow myself any more to play the shepherdess in my waking dreams. I have often soothed my thoughts with the quiet and innocence of pastoral employments, till I have, in my chamber, heard the winds whistle, and the sheep bleat: sometimes freed the lamb entangled in the thicket, and, sometimes, with my crook, encountered the wolf. I have a dress like that of the village maids, which I put on to help my imagination, and a pipe, on which I play softly, and suppose myself followed by my flocks."

"I will confess," said the prince, "an indulgence of fantastick delight more dangerous than yours. I have frequently endeavoured to image the possibility of a perfect government, by which all wrongs should be restrained, all vice reformed, and all subjects preserved in tranquillity and innocence. This thought produced innumerable schemes of reformation, and dictated many useful regulations and salutary edicts. This has been the sport, and sometimes the labour, of my solitude; and I start, when I think, with how little anguish I once supposed the death of my father and my brothers."

"Such," said Imlac, "are the effects of visionary

schemes; when we first form them, we know them to be absurd, but familiarize them by degrees, and, in time, lose sight of their folly."

Chapter XLV

THEY DISCOURSE WITH AN OLD MAN

THE evening was now far past, and they rose to return home. As they walked along the bank of the Nile, delighted with the beams of the moon quivering on the water, they saw, at a small distance, an old man, whom the prince had often heard in the assembly of the sages. "Yonder," said he, "is one whose years have calmed his passions, but not clouded his reason: let us close the disquisitions of the night, by inquiring, what are his sentiments of his own state, that we may know whether youth alone is to struggle with vexation, and whether any better hope remains for the latter part of life."

Here the sage approached and saluted them. They invited him to join their walk, and prattled awhile, as acquaintance that had unexpectedly met one another. The old man was cheerful and talkative, and the way seemed short in his company. He was pleased to find himself not disregarded, accompanied them to their house, and, at the prince's request, entered with them. They placed him in the seat of honour, and set wine and conserves before him.

"Sir," said the princess, "an evening walk must give, to a man of learning, like you, pleasures which ignorance and youth can hardly conceive. You know the qualities and the causes of all that you behold,

the laws by which the river flows, the periods in which the planets perform their revolutions. Every thing must supply you with contemplation, and renew the consciousness of your own dignity."

"Lady," answered he, "let the gay and the vigorous expect pleasure in their excursions; it is enough that age can obtain ease. To me, the world has lost its novelty: I look round, and see what I remember to have seen in happier days. I rest against a tree, and consider, that in the same shade I once disputed upon the annual overflow of the Nile, with a friend who is now silent in the grave. I cast my eyes upwards, fix them on the changing moon, and think, with pain, on the vicissitudes of life. I have ceased to take much delight in physical truth; for what have I to do with those things which I am soon to leave?"

"You may, at least, recreate yourself," said Imlac, "with the recollection of an honourable and useful life, and enjoy the praise which all agree to give you."

"Praise," said the sage, with a sigh, "is, to an old man, an empty sound. I have neither mother to be delighted with the reputation of her son, nor wife to partake the honours of her husband. I have outlived my friends and my rivals. Nothing is now of much importance; for I cannot extend my interest beyond myself. Youth is delighted with applause, because it is considered, as the earnest of some future good, and because the prospect of life is far extended; but to me, who am now declining to decrepitude, there is little to be feared from the

malevolence of men, and yet less to be hoped from their affection or esteem. Something they may yet take away, but they can give me nothing. Riches would now be useless, and high employment would be pain. My retrospect of life recalls to my view many opportunities of good neglected, much time squandered upon trifles, and more lost in idleness and vacancy. I leave many great designs unattempted, and many great attempts unfinished. My mind is burdened with no heavy crime, and, therefore, I compose myself to tranquillity; endeavour to abstract my thoughts from hopes and cares, which, though reason knows them to be vain, still try to keep their old possession of the heart; expect, with serene humility, that hour which nature cannot long delay; and hope to possess, in a better state, that happiness, which here I could not find, and that virtue, which here I have not attained.

He rose and went away, leaving his audience not much elated with the hope of long life. The prince consoled himself with remarking, that it was not reasonable to be disappointed by this account; for age had never been considered as the season of felicity, and, if it was possible to be easy in decline and weakness, it was likely that the days of vigour and alacrity might be happy; that the noon of life might be bright, if the evening could be calm.

The princess suspected that age was querulous and malignant, and delighted to repress the expectations of those, who had newly entered the world. She had seen the possessours of estates look with envy on

their heirs, and known many who enjoyed pleasure no longer than they could confine it to themselves.

Pekuah conjectured, that the man was older than he appeared, and was willing to impute his complaints to delirious dejection: or else supposed that he had been unfortunate, and was, therefore, discontented: "for nothing," said she, "is more common than to call our own condition, the condition of life."

Imlac, who had no desire to see them depressed, smiled at the comforts which they could so readily procure to themselves, and remembered, that, at the same age, he was equally confident of unmingled prosperity, and equally fertile of consolatory expedients. He forbore to force upon them unwelcome knowledge, which time itself would too soon impress. The princess and her lady retired; the madness of the astronomer hung on their minds, and they desired Imlac to enter upon his office, and delay next morning, the rising of the sun.

Chapter XLVI

The Princess and Pekuah visit the Astronomer

THE princess and Pekuah having talked in private of Imlac's astronomer, thought his character at once so amiable and so strange, that they could not be satisfied without a nearer knowledge; and Imlac was requested to find the means of bringing them together.

This was somewhat difficult; the philosopher had never received any visits from women, though he

lived in a city that had in it many Europeans, who followed the manners of their own countries, and many, from other parts of the world, that lived there with European liberty. The ladies would not be refused, and several schemes were proposed for the accomplishment of their design. It was proposed to introduce them as strangers in distress, to whom the sage was always accessible; but, after some deliberation, it appeared, that by this artifice, no acquaintance could be formed, for their conversation would be short, and they could not decently importune him often. "This," said Rasselas, "is true; but I have yet a stronger objection against the misrepresentation of your state. I have always considered it as treason against the great republick of human nature, to make any man's virtues the means of deceiving him, whether on great or little occasions. All imposture weakens confidence, and chills benevolence. When the sage finds that you are not what you seemed, he will feel the resentment natural to a man who, conscious of great abilities, discovers that he has been tricked by understandings meaner than his own, and, perhaps, the distrust, which he can never afterwards wholly lay aside, may stop the voice of counsel, and close the hand of charity; and where will you find the power of restoring his benefactions to mankind, or his peace to himself?"

To this no reply was attempted, and Imlac began to hope that their curiosity would subside; but, next day, Pekuah told him, she had now found an honest pretence for a visit to the astronomer, for she would

solicit permission to continue, under him, the studies in which she had been initiated by the Arab, and the princess might go with her, either as a fellow-student, or because a woman could not decently come alone. "I am afraid," said Imlac, "that he will be soon weary of your company: men, advanced far in knowledge do not love to repeat the elements of their art, and I am not certain that even of the elements, as he will deliver them, connected with inferences, and mingled with reflections, you are a very capable auditress." "That," said Pekuah, "must be my care: I ask of you only to take me thither. My knowledge is, perhaps, more than you imagine it, and, by concurring always with his opinions, I shall make him think it greater than it is."

The astronomer, in pursuance of this resolution, was told, that a foreign lady, travelling in search of knowledge, had heard of his reputation, and was desirous to become his scholar. The uncommonness of the proposal raised, at once, his surprise and curiosity; and when, after a short deliberation, he consented to admit her, he could not stay, without impatience, till the next day.

The ladies dressed themselves magnificently, and were attended by Imlac to the astronomer, who was pleased to see himself approached with respect by persons of so splendid an appearance. In the exchange of the first civilities, he was timorous and bashful; but, when the talk became regular, he recollected his powers, and justified the character which Imlac had given. Inquiring of Pekuah, what

could have turned her inclination toward astronomy, he received from her a history of her adventure at the pyramid, and of the time passed in the Arab's island. She told her tale with ease and elegance, and her conversation took possession of his heart. The discourse was then turned to astronomy; Pekuah displayed what she knew: he looked upon her as a prodigy of genius, and entreated her not to desist from a study, which she had so happily begun.

They came again and again, and were, every time, more welcome than before. The sage endeavoured to amuse them, that they might prolong their visits, for he found his thoughts grow brighter in their company; the clouds of solicitude vanished by degrees, as he forced himself to entertain them, and he grieved, when he was left, at their departure, to his old employment of regulating the seasons.

The princess and her favourite had now watched his lips for several months, and could not catch a single word, from which they could judge whether he continued, or not, in the opinion of his preternatural commission. They often contrived to bring him to an open declaration; but he easily eluded all their attacks, and on which side soever they pressed him, escaped from them to some other topick.

As their familiarity increased, they invited him often to the house of Imlac, where they distinguished him by extraordinary respect. He began, gradually, to delight in sublunary pleasures. He came early, and departed late; laboured to recommend himself by assiduity and compliance; excited their curiosity

after new arts, that they might still want his assistance; and, when they made any excursion of pleasure, or inquiry, entreated to attend them.

By long experience of his integrity and wisdom, the prince and his sister were convinced that he might be trusted without danger; and, lest he should draw any false hopes from the civilities which he received, discovered to him their condition, with the motives of their journey; and required his opinion on the CHOICE OF LIFE.

"Of the various conditions which the world spreads before you, which you shall prefer," said the sage, "I am not able to instruct you. I can only tell, that I have chosen wrong. I have passed my time in study, without experience; in the attainment of sciences, which can, for the most part, be but remotely useful to mankind. I have purchased knowledge at the expense of all the common comforts of life: I have missed the endearing elegance of female friendship, and the happy commerce of domestick tenderness. If I have obtained any prerogatives above other students, they have been accompanied with fear, disquiet, and scrupulosity; but, even of these prerogatives, whatever they were, I have, since my thoughts have been diversified by more intercourse with the world, begun to question the reality. When I have been, for a few days, lost in pleasing dissipation, I am always tempted to think that my inquiries have ended in errour, and that I have suffered much, and suffered it in vain."

Imlac was delighted to find that the sage's understanding was breaking through its mists, and resolved to detain him from the planets, till he should forget his task of ruling them, and reason should recover its original influence.

From this time the astronomer was received into familiar friendship, and partook of all their projects and pleasures: his respect kept him attentive, and the activity of Rasselas did not leave much time unengaged. Something was always to be done; the day was spent in making observations which furnished talk for the evening, and the evening was closed with a scheme for the morrow.

The sage confessed to Imlac, that since he had mingled in the gay tumults of life, and divided his hours by a succession of amusements, he found the conviction of his authority over the skies fade gradually from his mind, and began to trust less to an opinion which he never could prove to others, and which he now found subject to variation, from causes in which reason had no part. "If I am accidently left alone for a few hours," said he, "my inveterate persuasion rushes upon my soul, and my thoughts are chained down by some irresistible violence; but they are soon disentangled by the prince's conversation, and instantaneously released at the entrance of Pekuah. I am like a man habitually afraid of spectres, who is set at ease by a lamp, and wonders at the dread which harassed him in the dark; yet, if his lamp be extinguished, feels again the terrours which he knows, that when it is

light he shall feel no more. But I am sometimes afraid, lest I indulge my quiet by criminal negligence, and voluntarily forget the great charge with which I am intrusted. If I favour myself in a known errour, or am determined, by my own ease, in a doubtful question of this importance, how dreadful is my crime!"

"No disease of the imagination," answered Imlac, "is so difficult of cure, as that which is complicated with the dread of guilt: fancy and conscience then act interchangeably upon us, and so often shift their places, that the illusions of one are not distinguished from the dictates of the other. If fancy presents images not moral or religious, the mind drives them away when they give it pain, but when melancholick notions take the form of duty, they lay hold on the faculties without opposition, because we are afraid to exclude or banish them. For this reason, the superstitious are often melancholy, and the melancholy almost always superstitious.

"But do not let the suggestions of timidity overpower your better reason: the danger of neglect can be but as the probability of the obligation, which, when you consider it with freedom, you find very little, and that little growing every day less. Open your heart to the influence of the light, which, from time to time, breaks in upon you: when scruples importune you, which you in your lucid moments know to be vain, do not stand to parley, but fly to business or to Pekuah, and keep this thought always prevalent, that you are only one atom of the mass of

humanity, and have neither such virtue nor vice, as that you should be singled out for supernatural favours or afflictions."

Chapter XLVII

THE PRINCE ENTERS, AND BRINGS A NEW TOPICK

"ALL this," said the astronomer, "I have often thought, but my reason has been so long subjugated by an uncontroulable and overwhelming idea, that it durst not confide in its own decisions. I now see how fatally I betrayed my quiet, by suffering chimeras to prey upon me in secret; but melancholy shrinks from communication, and I never found a man before, to whom I could impart my troubles, though I had been certain of relief. I rejoice to find my own sentiments confirmed by yours, who are not easily deceived, and can have no motive or purpose to deceive. I hope that time and variety will dissipate the gloom that has so long surrounded me, and the latter part of my days will be spent in peace."

"Your learning and virtue," said Imlac, "may justly give you hopes."

Rasselas then entered with the princess and Pekuah, and inquired, whether they had contrived any new diversion for the next day? "Such," said Nekayah, "is the state of life, that none are happy, but by the anticipation of change: the change itself is nothing: when we have made it, the next wish is to change again. The world is not yet exhausted; let me see something to-morrow, which I never saw before."

"Variety," said Rasselas, "is so necessary to content, that even the happy valley disgusted me by the recurrence of its luxuries; yet I could not forbear to reproach myself with impatience, when I saw the monks of St. Anthony support, without complaint, a life not of uniform delight, but uniform hardship."

"Those men," answered Imlac, "are less wretched in their silent convent, than the Abissinian princes in their prison of pleasure. Whatever is done by the monks is incited by an adequate and reasonable motive. Their labour supplies them with necessaries; it, therefore, cannot be omitted, and is certainly rewarded. Their devotion prepares them for another state, and reminds them of its approach, while it fits them for it. Their time is regularly distributed; one duty succeeds another, so that they are not left open to the distraction of unguided choice, nor lost in the shades of listless inactivity. There is a certain task to be performed at an appropriated hour; and their toils are cheerful, because they consider them as acts of piety, by which they are always advancing towards endless felicity."

"Do you think," said Nekayah, "that the monastick rule is a more holy and less imperfect state than any other? May not he equally hope for future happiness, who converses openly with mankind, who succours the distressed by his charity, instructs the ignorant by his learning, and contributes, by his industry, to the general system of life: even though he should omit some of the mortifications which

are practised in the cloister, and allow himself such harmless delights, as his condition may place within his reach."

"This," said Imlac, "is a question which has long divided the wise, and perplexed the good. I am afraid to decide on either part. He that lives well in the world, is better than he that lives well in a monastery. But, perhaps, every one is not able to stem the temptations of publick life; and, if he cannot conquer, he may properly retreat. Some have little power to do good, and have, likewise, little strength to resist evil. Many are weary of their conflicts with adversity, and are willing to eject those passions which have long busied them in vain. And many are dismissed, by age and disease, from the more laborious duties of society. In monasteries, the weak and timorous may be happily sheltered, the weary may repose, and the penitent may meditate. Those retreats of prayer and contemplation have something so congenial to the mind of man, that, perhaps, there is scarcely one that does not propose to close his life in pious abstraction with a few associates, serious as himself."

"Such," said Pekuah, "has often been my wish; and I have heard the princess declare, that she should not willingly die in a crowd."

"The liberty of using harmless pleasures," proceeded Imlac, "will not be disputed; but it is still to be examined, what pleasures are harmless. The evil of any pleasure that Nekayah can imagine, is not in the act itself, but in its consequences. Pleasure, in

itself harmless, may become mischievous, by endearing to us a state which we know to be transient and probatory, and withdrawing our thoughts from that, of which every hour brings us nearer to the beginning, and of which no length of time will bring us to the end. Mortification is not virtuous in itself, nor has any other use, but that it disengages us from the allurements of sense. In the state of future perfection, to which we all aspire, there will be pleasure without danger, and security without restraint."

The princess was silent, and Rasselas, turning to the astronomer, asked him, whether he could not delay her retreat, by showing her something which she had not seen before.

"Your curiosity," said the sage, "has been so general, and your pursuit of knowledge so vigorous, that novelties are not now very easily to be found; but what you can no longer procure from the living, may be given by the dead. Among the wonders of this country are the catacombs, or the ancient repositories, in which the bodies of the earliest generations were lodged, and where, by the virtue of the gums which embalmed them, they yet remain without corruption."

"I know not," said Rasselas, "what pleasure the sight of the catacombs can afford; but, since nothing else offers, I am resolved to view them, and shall place this with many other things which I have done, because I would do something."

They hired a guard of horsemen, and the next day visited the catacombs. When they were about

to descend into the sepulchral caves, "Pekuah," said the princess, "we are now again invading the habitations of the dead: I know that you will stay behind; let me find you safe when I return." "No, I will not be left," answered Pekuah; "I will go down between you and the prince."

They then all descended, and roved, with wonder, through the labyrinth of subterraneous passages, where the bodies were laid in rows on either side.

Chapter XLVIII

IMLAC DISCOURSES ON THE NATURE OF THE SOUL

"WHAT reason," said the prince, "can be given, why the Egyptians should thus expensively preserve those carcasses which some nations consume with fire, others lay to mingle with the earth, and all agree to remove from their sight, as soon as decent rites can be performed?"

"The original of ancient customs," said Imlac, "is commonly unknown; for the practice often continues when the cause has ceased; and, concerning superstitious ceremonies, it is vain to conjecture; for what reason did not dictate, reason cannot explain. I have long believed that the practice of embalming arose only from tenderness to the remains of relations or friends; and to this opinion I am more inclined, because it seems impossible that this care should have been general: had all the dead been embalmed, their repositories must, in time, have been more spacious than the dwellings of the living. I

suppose only the rich or honourable were secured from corruption, and the rest left to the course of nature.

"But it is commonly supposed, that the Egyptians believed the soul to live as long as the body continued undissolved, and, therefore, tried this method of eluding death."

"Could the wise Egyptians," said Nekayah, "think so grossly of the soul? If the soul could once survive its separation, what could it afterwards receive or suffer from the body?"

"The Egyptians would, doubtless, think erroneously," said the astronomer, "in the darkness of heathenism, and the first dawn of philosophy. The nature of the soul is still disputed, amidst all our opportunities of clearer knowledge; some yet say, that it may be material, who, nevertheless, believe it to be immortal."

"Some," answered Imlac, "have, indeed, said, that the soul is material, but I can scarcely believe that any man has thought it, who knew how to think; for all the conclusions of reason enforce the immateriality of mind, and all the notices of sense and investigations of science concur to prove the unconsciousness of matter.

"It was never supposed that cogitation is inherent in matter, or that every particle is a thinking being. Yet, if any part of matter be devoid of thought, what part can we suppose to think? Matter can differ from matter only in form, density, bulk, motion, and direction of motion: to which of these, however

varied or combined, can consciousness be annexed? To be round or square, to be solid or fluid, to be great or little, to be moved slowly or swiftly one way or another, are modes of material existence, all equally alien from the nature of cogitation. If matter be once without thought, it can only be made to think by some new modification, but all the modifications which it can admit, are equally unconnected with cogitative powers."

"But the materialists," said the astronomer, "urge, that matter may have qualities, with which we are unacquainted."

"He who will determine," returned Imlac, "against that which he knows, because there may be something, which he knows not; he that can set hypothetical possibility against acknowledged certainty, is not to be admitted among reasonable beings. All that we know of matter is, that matter is inert, senseless, and lifeless; and, if this conviction cannot be opposed but by referring us to something that we know not, we have all the evidence that human intellect can admit. If that which is known may be overruled by that which is unknown, no being, not omniscient, can arrive at certainty."

"Yet let us not," said the astronomer, "too arrogantly limit the creator's power."

"It is no limitation of omnipotence," replied the poet, "to suppose that one thing is not consistent with another; that the same proposition cannot be, at once, true and false; that the same number cannot be even and odd; that cogitation cannot be

conferred on that which is created incapable of cogitation."

"I know not," said Nekayah, "any great use of this question. Does that immateriality, which, in my opinion, you have sufficiently proved, necessarily include eternal duration?"

"Of immateriality," said Imlac, "our ideas are negative, and, therefore, obscure. Immateriality seems to imply a natural power of perpetual duration, as a consequence of exemption from all causes of decay: whatever perishes is destroyed by the solution of its contexture, and separation of its parts; nor can we conceive how that which has no parts, and, therefore, admits no solution, can be naturally corrupted or impaired."

"I know not," said Rasselas, "how to conceive anything without extension; what is extended must have parts, and you allow, that whatever has parts may be destroyed."

"Consider your own conceptions," replied Imlac, "and the difficulty will be less. You will find substance without extension. An ideal form is no less real than material bulk: yet an ideal form has no extension. It is no less certain, when you think on a pyramid, that your mind possesses the idea of a pyramid, than that the pyramid itself is standing. What space does the idea of a pyramid occupy more than the idea of a grain of corn? or how can either idea suffer laceration? As is the effect, such is the cause: as thought, such is the power that thinks; a power impassive and indiscerptible."

"But the being," said Nekayah, "whom I fear to name, the being which made the soul, can destroy it."

"He, surely, can destroy it," answered Imlac, "since, however unperishable, it receives from a superiour nature its power of duration. That it will not perish by any inherent cause of decay, or principle of corruption, may be shown by philosophy; but philosophy can tell no more. That it will not be annihilated by him that made it, we must humbly learn from higher authority."

The whole assembly stood, awhile, silent and collected. "Let us return," said Rasselas, "from this scene of mortality. How gloomy would be these mansions of the dead to him who did not know that he should never die; that what now acts shall continue its agency, and what now thinks shall think on for ever. Those that lie here, stretched before us, the wise and the powerful of ancient times, warn us to remember the shortness of our present state: they were, perhaps, snatched away, while they were busy, like us, in the choice of life."

"To me," said the princess, "the choice of life is become less important; I hope, hereafter, to think only on the choice of eternity."

They then hastened out of the caverns, and, under the protection of their guard, returned to Cairo.

Chapter XLIX

THE CONCLUSION, IN WHICH NOTHING IS CONCLUDED

IT was now the time of the inundation of the Nile: a few days after their visit to the catacombs the river began to rise.

They were confined to their house. The whole region, being under water, gave them no invitation to any excursions, and, being well supplied with materials for talk, they diverted themselves with comparisons of the different forms of life, which they had observed, and with various schemes of happiness, which each of them had formed.

Pekuah was never so much charmed with any place as the convent of St. Anthony, where the Arab restored her to the princess, and wished only to fill it with pious maidens, and to be made prioress of the order: she was weary of expectation and disgust, and would gladly be fixed in some unvariable state.

The princess thought, that, of all sublunary things, knowledge was the best: she desired, first, to learn all sciences, and then purposed to found a college of learned women, in which she would preside; that, by conversing with the old, and educating the young, she might divide her time between the acquisition and communication of wisdom, and raise up, for the next age, models of prudence, and patterns of piety.

The prince desired a little kingdom, in which he might administer justice in his own person, and see

all the parts of government with his own eyes; but he could never fix the limits of his dominion, and was always adding to the number of his subjects.

Imlac and the astronomer were contented to be driven along the stream of life, without directing their course to any particular port.

Of these wishes, that they had formed, they well knew that none could be obtained. They deliberated awhile what was to be done, and resolved, when the inundation should cease, to return to Abissinia.

LETTERS

LETTERS

I.—To Mr. James Elphinston

Sept. 25th, 1750

Dear Sir,—You have, as I find by every kind of evidence, lost an excellent mother; and I hope you will not think me incapable of partaking of your grief. I have a mother, now eighty-two years of age, whom, therefore, I must soon lose, unless it please God that she rather should mourn for me. I read the letters in which you relate your mother's death to Mrs. Strahan, and think I do myself honour, when I tell you that I read them with tears; but tears are neither to you, nor to me, of any farther use, when once the tribute of nature has been paid. The business of life summons us away from useless grief, and calls us to the exercise of those virtues, of which we are lamenting our deprivation.

The greatest benefit which one friend can confer upon another, is to guard and excite and elevate his virtues. This your mother will still perform, if you diligently preserve the memory of her life, and of her death: a life, so far as I can learn, useful, wise, and innocent; and a death, resigned, peaceful, and holy. I cannot forbear to mention, that neither reason nor revelation denies you to hope, that you may increase her happiness, by obeying her precepts; and that she may, in her present state, look, with pleasure, upon every act of virtue, to which her instructions or example have contributed. Whether this be more than a pleasing dream, or a just opinion of separate spirits, is, indeed, of no great importance

to us, when we consider ourselves as acting under the eye of God: yet, surely, there is something pleasing in the belief, that our separation from those, whom we love, is merely corporeal; and it may be a great incitement to virtuous friendship, if it can be made probable, that that union, which has received the divine approbation, shall continue to eternity.

There is one expedient, by which you may, in some degree, continue her presence. If you write down minutely what you remember of her from your earliest years, you will read it with great pleasure, and receive from it many hints of soothing recollection, when time shall remove her yet farther from you, and your grief shall be matured to veneration. To this, however painful for the present, I cannot but advise you, as to a source of comfort and satisfaction in the time to come; for all comfort and all satisfaction is sincerely wished you by,

Dear sir,
Your most obliged, most obedient,
And most humble servant,
Sam. Johnson.

II.—To Mrs. Thrale

London, Aug. 13, 1765

Madam,—If you have really so good an opinion of me as you express, it will not be necessary to inform you how unwillingly I miss the opportunity of coming to Brighthelmstone in Mr. Thrale's company; or, since I cannot do what I wish first, how eagerly I shall catch the second degree of pleasure,

by coming to you and him, as soon as I can dismiss my work from my hands.

I am afraid to make promises, even to myself; but I hope that the week after the next will be the end of my present business. When business is done, what remains but pleasure? and where should pleasure be sought, but under Mrs. Thrale's influence?

Do not blame me for a delay by which I must suffer so much, and by which I suffer alone. If you cannot think I am good, pray think I am mending, and that in time I may deserve to be, dear madam, your, &c.

III.—To Mrs. Thrale

Lichfield, July 20, 1767

Madam,—Though I have been away so much longer than I purposed or expected, I have found nothing that withdraws my affections from the friends whom I left behind, or which makes me less desirous of reposing at that place, which your kindness and Mr. Thrale's allows me to call my home.

Miss Lucy[1] is more kind and civil than I expected, and has raised my esteem by many excellencies, very noble and resplendent, though a little discoloured by hoary virginity. Every thing else recalls to my remembrance years, in which I proposed what, I am afraid, I have not done, and promised myself pleasure which I have not found. But complaint can

[1] Miss Lucy Porter, daughter to Dr. Johnson's wife, by a former husband.

be of no use; and why then should I depress your hopes by my lamentations? I suppose it is the condition of humanity to design what never will be done, and to hope what never will be obtained. But, among the vain hopes, let me not number the hope which I have, of being long, dear madam, your, &c.

IV.—To the same

Lichfield, August 14, 1769

Madam,—I set out on Thursday morning, and found my companion, to whom I was very much a stranger, more agreeable than I expected. We went cheerfully forward, and passed the night at Coventry. We came in late, and went out early; and, therefore, I did not send for my cousin Tom: but I design to make him some amends for the omission.

Next day we came early to Lucy, who was, I believe, glad to see us. She had saved her best gooseberries upon the tree for me; and, as Steele says, "I was neither too proud nor too wise" to gather them. I have rambled a very little "inter fontes et flumina nota," but I am not yet well. They have cut down the trees in George lane. Evelyn, in his book of Forest Trees, tells us of wicked men that cut down trees, and never prospered afterwards; yet nothing has deterred these audacious aldermen from violating the Hamadryads of George lane. As an impartial traveller, I must however tell, that, in Stow street, where I left a draw-well, I have found a pump; but the lading-well, in this ill fated George lane, lies shamefully neglected.

I am going to-day, or to-morrow, to Ashbourne; but I am at a loss how I shall get back in time to London. Here are only chance coaches, so that there is no certainty of a place. If I do not come, let it not hinder your journey. I can be but a few days behind you; and I will follow in the Brighthelmstone coach. But I hope to come.

I took care to tell Miss Porter, that I have got another Lucy. I hope she is well. Tell Mrs. Salusbury that I beg her stay at Streatham, for little Lucy's sake. I am, &c.

V.—To Mrs. Thrale

Lichfield, July 11, 1770

Madam,—Since my last letter, nothing extraordinary has happened. Rheumatism, which has been very troublesome, is grown better. I have not yet seen Dr. Taylor, and July runs fast away. I shall not have much time for him, if he delays much longer to come or send. Mr. Green, the apothecary, has found a book, which tells who paid levies in our parish, and how much they paid, above a hundred years ago. Do you not think we study this book hard? Nothing is like going to the bottom of things. Many families, that paid the parish-rates, are now extinct, like the race of Hercules: "Pulvis et umbra sumus." What is nearest us, touches us most. The passions rise higher at domestick, than at imperial, tragedies. I am not wholly unaffected by the revolutions of Sadler street; nor can forbear to

mourn a little when old names vanish away, and new come into their place.

Do not imagine, madam, that I wrote this letter for the sake of these philosophical meditations; for when I began it, I had neither Mr. Green, nor his book, in my thoughts; but was resolved to write, and did not know what I had to send, but my respects to Mrs. Salusbury, and Mr. Thrale, and Harry, and the Misses. I am, dearest madam, your, &c.

VI.—To Mrs. Thrale

Ashbourne, July 23, 1770

Dearest Madam,—There had not been so long an interval between my two last letters, but that, when I came hither, I did not at first understand the hours of the post.

I have seen the great bull; and very great he is. I have seen, likewise, his heir apparent, who promises to inherit all the bulk, and all the virtues, of his sire. I have seen the man who offered a hundred guineas for the young bull, while he was yet little better than a calf. Matlock, I am afraid, I shall not see, but I purpose to see Dovedale; and, after all this seeing, I hope to see you. I am, &c.

VII.—To the same

Ashbourne, July 3, 1771

Dear Madam,—Last Saturday I came to Ashbourne; the dangers or the pleasures of the journey I have, at present, no disposition to recount; else

might I paint the beauties of my native plains; might I tell of the "smiles of nature, and the charms of art;" else might I relate, how I crossed the Staffordshire canal, one of the great efforts of human labour, and human contrivance, which, from the bridge on which I viewed it, passed away on either side, and loses itself in distant regions, uniting waters that nature had divided, and dividing lands which nature had united. I might tell how these reflections fermented in my mind, till the chaise stopped at Ashbourne, at Ashbourne in the Peak. Let not the barren name of the Peak terrify you; I have never wanted strawberries and cream. The great bull has no disease but age. I hope, in time, to be like the great bull; and hope you will be like him, too, a hundred years hence. I am, &c.

VIII.—To Mrs. Thrale

Ashbourne, July 10, 1771

Dearest Madam,—I am obliged to my friend Harry, for his remembrance, but think it a little hard that I hear nothing from Miss.

There has been a man here to-day to take a farm. After some talk, he went to see the bull, and said, that he had seen a bigger. Do you think he is likely to get the farm?

Toujours strawberries and cream.

Dr. Taylor is much better, and my rheumatism is less painful. Let me hear, in return, as much good of you and of Mrs. Salusbury. You despise the Dog and Duck: things that are at hand are always slighted.

I remember that Dr. Grevil, of Gloucester, sent for that water when his wife was in the same danger; but he lived near Malvern, and you live near the Dog and Duck. Thus, in difficult cases, we naturally trust most what we least know.

Why Bromefield, supposing that a lotion can do good, should despise laurel-water, in comparison with his own receipt, I do not see; and see, still less, why he should laugh at that which Wall thinks efficacious. I am afraid philosophy will not warrant much hope in a lotion.

Be pleased to make my compliments from Mrs. Salusbury to Susy. I am, &c.

IX.—To the same

October 31, 1772

Madam,—Though I am just informed, that, by some accidental negligence, the letter, which I wrote on Thursday, was not given to the post, yet I cannot refuse myself the gratification of writing again to my mistress; not that I have any thing to tell, but that, by showing how much I am employed upon you, I hope to keep you from forgetting me.

Doctor Taylor asked me, this morning, on what I was thinking; and I was thinking on Lucy. I hope Lucy is a good girl. But she cannot yet be so good as Queeney. I have got nothing yet for Queeney's cabinet.

I hope dear Mrs. Salusbury grows no worse. I wish any thing could be found that would make her better. You must remember her admonition, and

bustle in the brewhouse. When I come, you may expect to have your hands full with all of us.

Our bulls and cows are all well, but we yet hate the man that had seen a bigger bull. Our deer have died, but many are left. Our waterfall, at the garden, makes a great roaring this wet weather.

And so no more at present from, madam, your, &c.

X.—To Mrs. Thrale

November 23, 1772

Dear Madam,—I am sorry that none of your letters bring better news of the poor dear lady. I hope her pain is not great. To have a disease confessedly incurable, and apparently mortal, is a very heavy affliction; and it is still more grievous, when pain is added to despair.

Every thing else in your letter pleased me very well, except that when I come I entreat I may not be flattered, as your letters flatter me. You have read of heroes and princes ruined by flattery, and, I question, if any of them had a flatterer so dangerous as you. Pray keep strictly to your character of governess.

I cannot yet get well; my nights are flatulent and unquiet, but my days are tolerably easy, and Taylor says, that I look much better than when I came hither. You will see when I come, and I can take your word.

Our house affords no revolutions. The great bull is well. But I write, not merely to think on you, for I do that without writing, but to keep you a

little thinking on me. I perceive that I have taken a broken piece of paper, but that is not the greatest fault that you must forgive in, madam, your, &c.

XI.—To Mrs. Thrale

November 27, 1772

Dear Madam,—If you are so kind as to write to me on Saturday, the day on which you will receive this, I shall have it before I leave Ashbourne. I am to go to Lichfield on Wednesday, and purpose to find my way to London, through Birmingham and Oxford.

I was yesterday at Chatsworth. It is a very fine house. I wish you had been with me to see it; for then, as we are apt to want matter of talk, we should have gained something new to talk on. They complimented me with playing the fountain, and opening the cascade. But I am of my friend's opinion, that when one has seen the ocean, cascades are but little things.

I am in hope of a letter to-day from you or Queeney, but the post has made some blunder, and the packet is not yet distributed. I wish it may bring me a little good of you all. I am, &c.

XII.—To the same

Tuesday, January 26, 1773

Madam,—The inequalities of human life have always employed the meditation of deep thinkers, and I cannot forbear to reflect on the difference

between your condition and my own. You live upon mock-turtle, and stewed rumps of beef; I dined, yesterday, upon crumpets. You sit with parish officers, caressing and caressed, the idol of the table, and the wonder of the day. I pine in the solitude of sickness, not bad enough to be pitied, and not well enough to be endured. You sleep away the night, and laugh, or scold away the day. I cough and grumble, and grumble and cough. Last night was very tedious, and this day makes no promises of much ease. However, I have this day put on my shoes and hope that gout is gone. I shall have only the cough to contend with, and I doubt whether I shall get rid of that without change of place. I caught cold in the coach as I went away, and am disordered by very little things. Is it accident or age? I am, dearest madam, &c.

XIII.—To Mrs. Thrale

March 17, 1773

Dear Madam,—To tell you that I am sorry, both for the poor lady and for you, is useless. I cannot help either of you. The weakness of mind is, perhaps, only a casual interruption or intermission of the attention, such as we all suffer when some weighty care or urgent calamity has possession of the mind. She will compose herself. She is unwilling to die, and the first conviction of approaching death raised great perturbation. I think she has but very lately thought death close at hand. She will compose herself to do that as well as she can, which

must, at last, be done. May she not want the divine assistance!

You, madam, will have a great loss; a greater than is common in the loss of a parent. Fill your mind with hope of her happiness, and turn your thoughts first to him who gives and takes away, in whose presence the living and dead are standing together. Then remember, that when this mournful duty is paid, others yet remain of equal obligation, and, we may hope, of less painful performance. Grief is a species of idleness, and the necessity of attention to the present preserves us, by the merciful disposition of providence, from being lacerated and devoured by sorrow for the past. You must think on your husband and your children, and do what this dear lady has done for you.

Not to come to town while the great struggle continues is, undoubtedly, well resolved. But do not harass yourself into danger; you owe the care of your health to all that love you, at least to all whom it is your duty to love. You cannot give such a mother too much, if you do not give her what belongs to another. I am, &c.

XIV.—To Mrs. Thrale

April 27, 1773

Dear Madam,—Hope is more pleasing than fear, but not less fallacious; you know, when you do not try to deceive yourself, that the disease, which at last is to destroy, must be gradually growing worse, and that it is vain to wish for more than, that the descent to death may be slow and easy. In this wish I join with you, and hope it will be granted. Dear, dear lady, whenever she is lost she will be missed, and whenever she is remembered she will be lamented. Is it a good or an evil to me, that she now loves me? It is surely a good; for you will love me better, and we shall have a new principle of concord; and I shall be happier with honest sorrow, than with sullen indifference: and far happier still than with counterfeited sympathy.

I am reasoning upon a principle very far from certain, a confidence of survivance. You or I, or both, may be called into the presence of the supreme judge before her. I have lived a life of which I do not like the review. Surely I shall, in time, live better.

I sat down with an intention to write high compliments; but my thoughts have taken another course, and some other time must now serve to tell you with what other emotions, benevolence, and fidelity, I am, &c.

XV.—To the same

May 17, 1773

Madam,—Never imagine that your letters are long; they are always too short for my curiosity. I do not know that I was ever content with a single perusal.

Of dear Mrs. Salusbury I never expect much better news than you send me; *de pis en pis* is the natural and certain course of her dreadful malady. I am content, when it leaves her ease enough for the exercise of her mind.

Why should Mr. * * * * * suppose, that what I took the liberty of suggesting, was concerted with you? He does not know how much I revolve his affairs, and how honestly I desire his prosperity. I hope he has let the hint take some hold of his mind.

Your declaration to Miss * * * * * is more general than my opinions allow. I think an unlimited promise of acting by the opinion of another so wrong, that nothing, or hardly anything, can make it right. All unnecessary vows are folly, because they suppose a prescience of the future which has not been given us. They are, I think, a crime, because they resign that life to chance which God has given us to be regulated by reason; and superinduce a kind of fatality, from which it is the great privilege of our nature to be free. Unlimited obedience is due only to the universal father of heaven and earth. My parents may be mad and foolish; may be

wicked and malicious; may be erroneously religious, or absurdly scrupulous. I am not bound to compliance with mandates, either positive or negative, which either religion condemns, or reason rejects. There wanders about the world a wild notion, which extends over marriage more than over any other transaction. If Miss * * * * * followed a trade, would it be said, that she was bound, in conscience, to give or refuse credit at her father's choice? And is not marriage a thing in which she is more interested, and has, therefore, more right of choice? When I may suffer for my own crimes, when I may be sued for my own debts, I may judge, by parity of reason, for my own happiness. The parent's moral right can arise only from his kindness, and his civil right only from his money.

Conscience cannot dictate obedience to the wicked, or compliance with the foolish; and of interest mere prudence is the judge.

If the daughter is bound without a promise, she promises nothing; and if she is not bound, she promises too much.

What is meant by tying up money in trade I do not understand. No money is so little tied, as that which is employed in trade. Mr. * * * * *, perhaps, only means, that in consideration of money to be advanced, he will oblige his son to be a trader. This is reasonable enough. Upon ten thousand pounds, diligently occupied, they may live in great plenty and splendour, without the mischiefs of idleness.

I can write a long letter, as well as my mistress; and shall be glad that my long letters may be as welcome as hers.

My nights are grown again very uneasy and troublesome. I know not that the country will mend them; but I hope your company will mend my days. Though I cannot now expect much attention, and would not wish for more than can be spared from the poor dear lady, yet I shall see you and hear you every now and then; and to see and hear you, is always to hear wit, and to see virtue.

I shall, I hope, see you to-morrow, and a little on the two next days; and with that little I must, for the present, try to be contented. I am, &c.

XVI.—To Mrs. Thrale

August 12, 1773

Dear Madam,—We left London on Friday, the 6th, not very early, and travelled, without any memorable accident, through a country which I had seen before. In the evening I was not well, and was forced to stop at Stilton, one stage short of Stamford, where we intended to have lodged.

On the 7th, we passed through Stamford and Grantham, and dined at Newark, where I had only time to observe, that the market-place was uncommonly spacious and neat. In London, we should call it a square, though the sides were neither straight nor parallel. We came, at night, to Doncaster, and went to church in the morning, where Chambers found the monument of Robert of Doncaster, who

says on his stone something like this:—What I gave, that I have; what I spent, that I had; what I left, that I lost.—So saith Robert of Doncaster, who reigned in the world sixty-seven years, and all that time lived not one. Here we were invited to dinner, and, therefore, made no great haste away.

We reached York, however, that night; I was much disordered with old complaints. Next morning we saw the minster, an edifice of loftiness and elegance, equal to the highest hopes of architecture. I remember nothing, but the dome of St. Paul's, that can be compared with the middle walk. The chapter-house is a circular building, very stately, but, I think, excelled by the chapter-house of Lincoln.

I then went to see the ruins of the abbey, which are almost vanished, and I remember nothing of them distinct.

The next visit was to the gaol, which they call the castle; a fabrick built lately, such is terrestrial mutability, out of the materials of the ruined abbey. The under gaoler was very officious to show his fetters, in which there was no contrivance. The head gaoler came in, and seeing me look, I suppose, fatigued, offered me wine, and, when I went away, would not suffer his servant to take money. The gaol is accounted the best in the kingdom, and you find the gaoler deserving of his dignity.

We dined at York, and went on to Northallerton, a place of which I know nothing, but that it afforded us a lodging on Monday night, and about

two hundred and seventy years ago gave birth to Roger Ascham.

Next morning we changed our horses at Darlington, where Mr. Cornelius Harrison, a cousin-german of mine, was perpetual curate. He was the only one of my relations who ever rose in fortune above penury, or in character above neglect.

The church is built crosswise, with a fine spire, and might invite a traveller to survey it; but I, perhaps, wanted vigour, and thought I wanted time.

The next stage brought us to Durham, a place of which Mr. Thrale bade me take particular notice. The bishop's palace has the appearance of an old feudal castle, built upon an eminence, and looking down upon the river, upon which was formerly thrown a drawbridge, as I suppose, to be raised at night, lest the Scots should pass it.

The cathedral has a massiness and solidity, such as I have seen in no other place; it rather awes than pleases, as it strikes with a kind of gigantick dignity, and aspires to no other praise than that of rocky solidity and indeterminate duration. I had none of my friends resident, and, therefore, saw but little. The library is mean and scanty.

At Durham, beside all expectation, I met an old friend: Miss Fordyce is married there to a physician. We met, I think, with honest kindness on both sides. I thought her much decayed, and having since heard that the banker had involved her husband in his extensive ruin, I cannot forbear to

think, that I saw in her withered features more impression of sorrow than that of time —

"Qua terra patet, sera regnat Erinnys."

He that wanders about the world sees new forms of human misery, and if he chances to meet an old friend, meets a face darkened with troubles.

On Tuesday night we came hither; yesterday I took some care of myself, and to-day I am *quite polite*. I have been taking a view of all that could be shown me, and find that all very near to nothing. You have often heard me complain of finding myself disappointed by books of travels; I am afraid travel itself will end likewise in disappointment. One town, one country, is very like another: civilized nations have the same customs, and barbarous nations have the same nature: there are, indeed, minute discriminations both of places and manners, which, perhaps, are not wanting of curiosity, but which a traveller seldom stays long enough to investigate and compare. The dull utterly neglect them; the acute see a little, and supply the rest with fancy and conjecture.

I shall set out again to-morrow; but I shall not, I am afraid, see Alnwick, for Dr. Percy is not there. I hope to lodge to-morrow night at Berwick, and the next at Edinburgh, where I shall direct Mr. Drummond, bookseller at Ossian's head, to take care of my letters.

I hope the little dears are all well, and that my dear master and mistress may go somewhither; but,

wherever you go, do not forget, madam, your most humble servant.

I am pretty well.

August 15

Thus far I had written at Newcastle. I forgot to send it. I am now at Edinburgh; and have been this day running about. I run pretty well.

XVII.—To Mrs. Thrale

Edinburgh, August 17, 1773

Dear Madam,—On the 13th, I left Newcastle, and, in the afternoon, came to Alnwick, where we were treated with great civility by the duke: I went through the apartments, walked on the wall, and climbed the towers. That night we lay at Belford, and, on the next night, came to Edinburgh. On Sunday (15th) I went to the English chapel. After dinner, Dr. Robertson came in, and promised to show me the place. On Monday I saw their publick buildings: the cathedral, which I told Robertson I wished to see, because it had once been a church; the courts of justice, the parliament-house, the advocates' library, the repository of records, the college, and its library, and the palace, particularly the old tower, where the king of Scotland seized David Rizzio in the queen's presence. Most of their buildings are very mean; and the whole town bears some resemblance to the old part of Birmingham.

Boswell has very handsome and spacious rooms, level with the ground, on one side of the house, and, on the other, four stories high.

At dinner, on Monday, were the dutchess of Douglas, an old lady, who talks broad Scotch with a paralytick voice, and is scarcely understood by her own countrymen; the lord chief baron, sir Adolphus Oughton, and many more. At supper there was such a conflux of company, that I could scarcely support the tumult. I have never been well in the whole journey, and am very easily disordered.

This morning I saw, at breakfast, Dr. Blacklock, the blind poet, who does not remember to have seen light, and is read to, by a poor scholar, in Latin, Greek, and French. He was, originally, a poor scholar himself. I looked on him with reverence. To-morrow our journey begins; I know not when I shall write again. I am but poorly. I am, &c.

XVIII.—To Mrs. Thrale

Bamff, August 25, 1773

Dear Madam,—It has so happened, that, though I am perpetually thinking on you, I could seldom find opportunity to write; I have, in fourteen days, sent only one letter; you must consider the fatigues of travel, and the difficulties encountered in a strange country.

August 18th. I passed, with Boswell, the frith of Forth, and began our journey; in the passage we observed an island, which I persuaded my companions to survey. We found it a rock somewhat troublesome to climb, about a mile long, and half a mile broad; in the middle were the ruins of an old fort,

which had, on one of the stones,—"Maria Re. 1564." It had been only a blockhouse, one story high. I measured two apartments, of which the walls were entire, and found them twenty-seven feet long, and twenty-three broad. The rock had some grass and many thistles; both cows and sheep were grazing. There was a spring of water. The name is Inchkeith. Look on your maps. This visit took about an hour. We pleased ourselves with being in a country all our own, and then went back to the boat, and landed at Kinghorn, a mean town; and, travelling through Kirkaldie, a very long town, meanly built, and Cowpar, which I could not see, because it was night, we came late to St. Andrew's, the most ancient of the Scotch universities, and once the see of the primate of Scotland. The inn was full; but lodgings were provided for us at the house of the professor of rhetorick, a man of elegant manners, who showed us, in the morning, the poor remains of a stately cathedral, demolished in Knox's reformation, and now only to be imagined, by tracing its foundation, and contemplating the little ruins that are left. Here was once a religious house. Two of the vaults or cellars of the sub-prior are even yet entire. In one of them lives an old woman, who claims an hereditary residence in it, boasting that her husband was the sixth tenant of this gloomy mansion, in a lineal descent, and claims, by her marriage with this lord of the cavern, an alliance with the Bruces. Mr. Boswell staid awhile to interrogate her, because he understood her language; she told him, that she and

her cat lived together; that she had two sons somewhere, who might, perhaps, be dead; that, when there were quality in the town, notice was taken of her, and that now she was neglected, but did not trouble them. Her habitation contained all that she had; her turf, for fire, was laid in one place, and her balls of coal-dust in another, but her bed seemed to be clean. Boswell asked her, if she never heard any noises; but she could tell him of nothing supernatural, though she often wandered in the night among the graves and ruins; only she had, sometimes, notice, by dreams, of the death of her relations. We then viewed the remains of a castle, on the margin of the sea, in which the archbishops resided, and in which cardinal Beatoun was killed.

The professors, who happened to be resident in the vacation, made a publick dinner, and treated us very kindly and respectfully. They showed us their colleges, in one of which there is a library that, for luminousness and elegance, may vie, at least, with the new edifice at Streatham. But learning seems not to prosper among them; one of their colleges has been lately alienated, and one of their churches lately deserted. An experiment was made of planting a shrubbery in the church, but it did not thrive.

Why the place should thus fall to decay, I know not; for education, such as is here to be had, is sufficiently cheap. The term, or, as they call it, their session, lasts seven months in the year, which the students of the highest rank and greatest expense, may pass here for twenty pounds, in which are

included board, lodging, books, and the continual instruction of three professors.

20th. We left St. Andrew's, well satisfied with our reception, and, crossing the frith of Tay, came to Dundee, a dirty, despicable town. We passed, afterwards, through Aberbrothick, famous once for an abbey, of which there are only a few fragments left; but those fragments testify that the fabrick was once of great extent, and of stupendous magnificence. Two of the towers are yet standing, though shattered; into one of them Boswell climbed, but found the stairs broken: the way into the other we did not see, and had not time to search; I believe it might be ascended, but the top, I think, is open.

We lay at Montrose, a neat place, with a spacious area for the market, and an elegant town-house.

21st. We travelled towards Aberdeen, another university, and, in the way, dined at lord Monboddo's, the Scotch judge, who has lately written a strange book about the origin of language, in which he traces monkeys up to men, and says that, in some countries, the human species have tails like other beasts. He inquired for these long-tailed men of Banks, and was not well pleased, that they had not been found in all his peregrination. He talked nothing of this to me, and I hope we parted friends; for we agreed pretty well, only we disputed in adjusting the claims of merit between a shopkeeper of London, and a savage of the American wildernesses. Our opinions were, I think, maintained, on both sides, without full conviction: Monboddo

declared boldly for the savage; and I, perhaps, for that reason, sided with the citizen.

We came late to Aberdeen, where I found my dear mistress's letter, and learned that all our little people were happily recovered of the measles. Every part of your letter was pleasing.

There are two cities of the name of Aberdeen: the old town, built about a mile inland, once the see of a bishop, which contains the king's college, and the remains of the cathedral; and the new town, which stands, for the sake of trade, upon a frith or arm of the sea, so that ships rest against the quay.

The two cities have their separate magistrates; and the two colleges are, in effect, two universities, which confer degrees independently of each other.

New Aberdeen is a large town, built almost wholly of that granite which is used for the new pavement in London, which, hard as it is, they square with very little difficulty. Here I first saw the women in plaids. The plaid makes, at once, a hood and cloak, without cutting or sewing, merely by the manner of drawing the opposite sides over the shoulders. The maids, at the inns, run over the house barefoot; and children, not dressed in rags, go without shoes or stockings. Shoes are, indeed, not yet in universal use; they came late into this country. One of the professors told us, as we were mentioning a fort, built by Cromwell, that the country owed much of its present industry to Cromwell's soldiers. They taught us, said he, to raise cabbage, and make shoes. How they lived without shoes may

yet be seen; but, in the passage through villages, it seems to him, that surveys their gardens, that when they had not cabbage, they had nothing.

Education is here of the same price as at St. Andrew's, only the session is but from the 1st of November to the 1st of April. The academical buildings seem rather to advance than decline. They showed their libraries, which were not very splendid, but some manuscripts were so exquisitely penned, that I wished my dear mistress to have seen them. I had an unexpected pleasure, by finding an old acquaintance, now professor of physick, in the king's college: we were, on both sides, glad of the interview, having not seen, nor, perhaps, thought on one another, for many years; but we had no emulation, nor had either of us risen to the other's envy, and our old kindness was easily renewed. I hope we shall never try the effect of so long an absence, and that I shall always be, madam, your, &c.

XIX.—To Mrs. Thrale

Inverness, August 28, 1773

Dear Madam,—August 23rd, I had the honour of attending the lord provost of Aberdeen, and was presented with the freedom of the city, not in a gold box, but in good Latin. Let me pay Scotland one just praise! there was no officer gaping for a fee; this could have been said of no city on the English side of the Tweed. I wore my patent of freedom, *pro more*, in my hat, from the new town to the old,

about a mile. I then dined with my friend, the professor of physick, at his house, and saw the king's college. Boswell was very angry, that the Aberdeen professors would not talk. When I was at the English church, in Aberdeen, I happened to be espied by lady Di. Middleton, whom I had sometime seen in London; she told what she had seen to Mr. Boyd, lord Errol's brother, who wrote us an invitation to lord Errol's house, called Slane's castle. We went thither on the next day, (24th of August,) and found a house, not old, except but one tower, built on the margin of the sea, upon a rock, scarce accessible from the sea; at one corner, a tower makes a perpendicular continuation of the lateral surface of the rock, so that it is impracticable to walk round; the house inclosed a square court, and on all sides within the court is a piazza, or gallery, two stories high. We came in, as we were invited to dinner, and, after dinner, offered to go; but lady Errol sent us word by Mr. Boyd, that if we went before lord Errol came home, we must never be forgiven, and ordered out the coach to show us two curiosities. We were first conducted by Mr. Boyd, to Dunbuys, or the yellow rock. Dunbuys is a rock, consisting of two protuberances, each, perhaps, one hundred yards round, joined together by a narrow neck, and separated from the land by a very narrow channel or gully. These rocks are the haunts of seafowl, whose clang, though this is not their season, we heard at a distance. The eggs and the young are gathered here, in great numbers, at the time of

breeding. There is a bird here, called a coot, which, though not much bigger than a duck, lays a larger egg than a goose. We went then to see the Buller, or Bouilloir, of Buchan: Buchan is the name of the district, and the Buller is a small creek, or gulf, into which the sea flows through an arch of the rock. We walked round it, and saw it black, at a great depth. It has its name from the violent ebullition of the water, when high winds or high tides drive it up the arch into the basin. Walking a little farther, I spied some boats, and told my companions that we would go into the Buller and examine it. There was no danger; all was calm; we went through the arch, and found ourselves in a narrow gulf, surrounded by craggy rocks, of height not stupendous, but, to a mediterranean visitor, uncommon. On each side was a cave, of which the fisherman knew not the extent, in which smugglers hide their goods, and sometimes parties of pleasure take a dinner. I am, &c.

XX.—To Mrs. Thrale

Skie, September 6, 1777

Dearest Madam,—I am now looking on the sea, from a house of sir Alexander Macdonald, in the isle of Skie. Little did I once think of seeing this region of obscurity, and little did you once expect a salutation from this verge of European life. I have now the pleasure of going where nobody goes, and seeing what nobody sees. Our design is to visit several of the smaller islands, and then pass over to the south-west of Scotland.

I returned from the sight of Buller's Buchan to lord Errol's, and, having seen his library, had, for a time, only to look upon the sea, which rolled between us and Norway. Next morning, August 25th, we continued our journey through a country not uncultivated, but so denuded of its woods, that, in all this journey, I had not travelled a hundred yards between hedges, or seen five trees fit for the carpenter. A few small plantations may be found, but I believe scarcely any thirty years old; at least, they are all posterior to the union. This day we dined with a country-gentleman, who has in his grounds the remains of a Druid's temple, which, when it is complete, is nothing more than a circle, or double circle, of stones, placed at equal distances, with a flat stone, perhaps an altar, at a certain point, and a stone, taller than the rest, at the opposite point. The tall stone is erected, I think, at the south. Of these circles, there are many in all the unfrequented parts of the island. The inhabitants of these parts respect them as memorials of the sculpture of some illustrious person. Here I saw a few trees. We lay at Bamff.

August 26th. We dined at Elgin, where we saw the ruins of a noble cathedral; the chapter-house is yet standing. A great part of Elgin is built with small piazzas to the lower story. We went on to Foris, over the heath where Macbeth met the witches, but had no adventure; only in the way we saw, for the first time, some houses with fruit-trees about them. The improvements of the Scotch are

for immediate profit; they do not yet think it quite worth their while to plant what will not produce something to be eaten, or sold, in a very little time. We rested at Foris.

A very great proportion of the people are barefoot; shoes are not yet considered as necessaries of life. It is still the custom to send out the sons of gentlemen without them into the streets and ways. There are more beggars than I have ever seen in England; they beg, if not silently, yet very modestly.

Next day we came to Nairn, a miserable town, but a royal burg, of which the chief annual magistrate is styled lord provost. In the neighbourhood we saw the castle of the old thane of Cawdor. There is one ancient tower, with its battlements and winding stairs, yet remaining; the rest of the house is, though not modern, of later erection.

On the 28th we went to Fort George, which is accounted the most regular fortification in the island. The major of artillery walked with us round the walls, and showed us the principles upon which every part was constructed, and the way in which it could be defended. We dined with the governour, sir Eyre Coote, and his officers. It was a very pleasant and instructive day; but nothing puts my honoured mistress out of mind.

At night we came to Inverness, the last considerable town in the north, where we staid all the next day, for it was Sunday, and saw the ruins of what is called Macbeth's castle. It never was a large

house, but was strongly situated. From Inverness we were to travel on horse-back.

August 30th. We set out with four horses. We had two highlanders to run by us, who were active, officious, civil, and hardy. Our journey was, for many miles, along a military way, made upon the banks of Lough Ness, a water about eighteen miles long, but not, I think, half a mile broad. Our horses were not bad, and the way was very pleasant; the rock, out of which the road was cut, was covered with birch-trees, fern, and heath. The lake below was beating its bank by a gentle wind, and the rocks beyond the water, on the right, stood sometimes horrid, and wild, and sometimes opened into a kind of bay, in which there was a spot of cultivated ground, yellow with corn. In one part of the way we had trees on both sides, for, perhaps, half a mile. Such a length of shade, perhaps, Scotland cannot show in any other place.

You are not to suppose, that here are to be any more towns or inns. We came to a cottage, which they call the General's Hut, where we alighted to dine, and had eggs and bacon, and mutton, with wine, rum, and whiskey. I had water.

At a bridge over the river, which runs into the Ness, the rocks rise on three sides, with a direction almost perpendicular, to a great height; they are, in part, covered with trees, and exhibit a kind of dreadful magnificence:—standing like the barriers of nature, placed to keep different orders of being in perpetual separation. Near this bridge is the fall of

Fiers, a famous cataract, of which, by clambering over the rocks, we obtained a view. The water was low, and, therefore, we had only the pleasure of knowing that rain would make it, at once, pleasing and formidable; there will then be a mighty flood, foaming along a rocky channel, frequently obstructed by protuberances, and exasperated by reverberation, at last precipitated with a sudden descent, and lost in the depth of a gloomy chasm.

We came, somewhat late, to Fort Augustus, where the lieutenant-governour met us beyond the gates, and apologized that, at that hour, he could not, by the rules of a garrison, admit us, otherwise than at a narrow door, which only one can enter at a time. We were well entertained and well lodged, and, next morning, after having viewed the fort, we pursued our journey.

Our way now lay over the mountains, which are not to be passed by climbing them directly, but by traversing; so that, as we went forward, we saw our baggage following us below, in a direction exactly contrary. There is, in these ways, much labour, but little danger, and, perhaps, other places, of which very terrifick representations are made, are not, in themselves, more formidable. These roads have all been made, by hewing the rock away with pickaxes, or bursting it with gunpowder. The stones, so separated, are often piled loose, as a wall by the wayside. We saw an inscription, importing the year in which one of the regiments made two thousand yards of the road eastward.

After tedious travel of some hours, we came to what, I believe, we must call a village, a place where there were three huts built of turf; at one of which we were to have our dinner and our bed, for we could not reach any better place that night. This place is called Enoch in Glenmorrison. The house, in which we lodged, was distinguished by a chimney, the rest had only a hole for the smoke. Here we had eggs, and mutton, and a chicken, and a sausage, and rum. In the afternoon tea was made by a very decent girl in a printed linen: she engaged me so much, that I made her a present of Cocker's arithmetick. I am, &c.

XXI.—To Mrs. Thrale

Skie, Sept. 14, 1773

Dearest Madam,—The post, which comes but once a week into these parts, is so soon to go, that I have not time to go on where I left off in my last letter. I have been several days in the island of Raarsa, and am now again in the isle of Skie, but at the other end of it.

Skie is almost equally divided between the two great families of Macdonald and Macleod, other proprietors having only small districts. The two great lords do not know, within twenty square miles, the contents of their own territories.

—— kept up but ill the reputation of highland hospitality; we are now with Macleod, quite at the other end of the island, where there is a fine young gentleman and fine ladies. The ladies are studying

Erse. I have a cold, and am miserably deaf, and am troublesome to lady Macleod; I force her to speak loud, but she will seldom speak loud enough.

Raarsa is an island about fifteen miles long and two broad, under the dominion of one gentleman, who has three sons and ten daughters; the eldest is the beauty of this part of the world, and has been polished at Edinburgh: they sing and dance, and, without expense, have upon their table most of what sea, air, or earth can afford. I intended to have written about Raarsa, but the post will not wait longer than while I send my compliments to my dear master and little mistresses. I am, &c.

XXII.—To Mrs. Thrale

Skie, Sept. 21, 1773

Dearest Madam,—I am so vexed at the necessity of sending yesterday so short a letter, that I purpose to get a long letter beforehand, by writing something every day, which I may the more easily do, as a cold makes me now too deaf to take the usual pleasure in conversation. Lady Macleod is very good to me; and the place, at which we now are, is equal, in strength of situation, in the wildness of the adjacent country, and in the plenty and elegance of the domestick entertainment, to a castle in Gothick romances. The sea, with a little island, is before us; cascades play within view. Close to the house is the formidable skeleton of an old castle, probably Danish; and the whole mass of building stands upon a protuberance of rock, inaccessible till

of late, but by a pair of stairs on the seaside, and secure, in ancient times, against any enemy that was likely to invade the kingdom of Skie.

Macleod has offered me an island; if it were not too far off, I should hardly refuse it: my island would be pleasanter than Brighthelmstone, if you and my master could come to it; but I cannot think it pleasant to live quite alone,

"Oblitusque meorûm, obliviscendus et illis."

That I should be elated, by the dominion of an island to forgetfulness of my friends at Streatham, I cannot believe, and I hope never to deserve that they should be willing to forget me.

It has happened, that I have been often recognised in my journey, where I did not expect it. At Aberdeen, I found one of my acquaintance professor of physick: turning aside to dine with a country-gentleman, I was owned, at table, by one who had seen me at a philosophical lecture: at Macdonald's I was claimed by a naturalist, who wanders about the islands to pick up curiosities: and I had once, in London, attracted the notice of lady Macleod. I will now go on with my account.

The highland girl made tea, and looked and talked not inelegantly; her father was by no means an ignorant or a weak man; there were books in the cottage, among which were some volumes of Prideaux's Connexion: this man's conversation we were glad of while we staid. He had been out, as they call it, in forty-five, and still retained his old

opinions. He was going to America, because his rent was raised beyond what he thought himself able to pay.

At night our beds were made, but we had some difficulty in persuading ourselves to lie down in them, though we had put on our own sheets; at last we ventured, and I slept very soundly in the vale of Glenmorrison, amidst the rocks and mountains. Next morning our landlord liked us so well, that he walked some miles with us for our company, through a country so wild and barren, that the proprietor does not, with all his pressure upon his tenants, raise more than four hundred pounds a year for near one hundred square miles, or sixty thousand acres. He let us know, that he had forty head of black cattle, a hundred goats, and a hundred sheep, upon a farm that he remembered let at five pounds a year, but for which he now paid twenty. He told us some stories of their march into England. At last, he left us, and we went forward, winding among mountains, sometimes green and sometimes naked, commonly so steep, as not easily to be climbed by the greatest vigour and activity: our way was often crossed by little rivulets, and we were entertained with small streams trickling from the rocks, which, after heavy rains, must be tremendous torrents.

About noon we came to a small glen, so they call a valley, which, compared with other places, appeared rich and fertile; here our guides desired us to stop, that the horses might graze, for the journey

was very laborious, and no more grass would be found. We made no difficulty of compliance, and I sat down to take notes on a green bank, with a small stream running at my feet, in the midst of savage solitude, with mountains before me, and, on either hand, covered with heath. I looked around me, and wondered, that I was not more affected, but the mind is not at all times equally ready to be put in motion; if my mistress, and master, and Queeney had been there, we should have produced some reflections among us, either poetical or philosophical; for though "solitude be the nurse of woe," conversation is often the parent of remarks and discoveries.

In about an hour we remounted, and pursued our journey. The lake, by which we had travelled for some time, ended in a river, which we passed by a bridge, and came to another glen, with a collection of huts, called Auknashealds; the huts were, generally, built of clods of earth, held together by the intertexture of vegetable fibres, of which earth there are great levels in Scotland, which they call mosses. Moss in Scotland is bog in Ireland, and moss-trooper is bog-trotter; there was, however, one hut built of loose stones, piled up, with great thickness, into a strong, though not solid wall. From this house we obtained some great pails of milk, and having brought bread with us, we were liberally regaled. The inhabitants, a very coarse tribe, ignorant of any language but Erse, gathered so fast about us, that, if we had not had highlanders with us, they

might have caused more alarm than pleasure; they are called the clan of Macrae.

We had been told, that nothing gratified the highlanders so much as snuff and tobacco, and had, accordingly, stored ourselves with both at Fort Augustus. Boswell opened his treasure, and gave them each a piece of tobacco roll. We had more bread than we could eat for the present, and were more liberal than provident. Boswell cut it in slices, and gave them an opportunity of tasting wheaten bread, for the first time. I then got some half-pence for a shilling, and made up the deficiencies of Boswell's distribution, who had given some money among the children. We then directed, that the mistress of the stone-house should be asked, what we must pay her. She, who, perhaps, had never before sold any thing but cattle, knew not, I believe, well what to ask, and referred herself to us: we obliged her to make some demand, and one of the highlanders settled the account with her at a shilling. One of the men advised her, with the cunning that clowns never can be without, to ask more; but she said that a shilling was enough. We gave her half-a-crown, and she offered part of it again. The Macraes were so well pleased with our behaviour, that they declared it the best day they had seen, since the time of the old laird of Macleod, who, I suppose, like us, stopped in their valley, as he was travelling to Skie.

We were mentioning this view of the highlander's life at Macdonald's, and mentioning the Macraes,

with some degree of pity, when a highland lady informed us, that we might spare our tenderness, for she doubted not but the woman, who supplied us with milk, was mistress of thirteen or fourteen milch cows.

I cannot forbear to interrupt my narrative. Boswell, with some of his troublesome kindness, has informed this family, and reminded me, that the 18th of September is my birthday. The return of my birthday, if I remember it, fills me with thoughts which it seems to be the general care of humanity to escape. I can now look back upon threescore and four years, in which little has been done, and little has been enjoyed; a life, diversified by misery, spent part in the sluggishness of penury, and part under the violence of pain, in gloomy discontent, or importunate distress. But, perhaps, I am better than I should have been, if I had been less afflicted. With this I will try to be content.

In proportion as there is less pleasure in retrospective considerations, the mind is more disposed to wander forward into futurity; but, at sixty-four, what promises, however liberal, of imaginary good can futurity venture to make? yet something will be always promised, and some promises will be always credited. I am hoping, and I am praying, that I may live better in the time to come, whether long or short, than I have yet lived, and, in the solace of that hope, endeavour to repose. Dear Queeney's day is next: I hope she, at sixty-four, will have less to regret.

I will now complain no more, but tell my mistress of my travels.

After we left the Macraes, we travelled on through a country like that which we passed in the morning. The highlands are very uniform, for there is little variety in universal barrenness; the rocks, however, are not all naked, for some have grass on their sides, and birches and alders on their tops, and in the valleys are often broad and clear streams, which have little depth, and commonly run very quick; the channels are made by the violence of the wintry floods; the quickness of the stream is in proportion to the declivity of the descent, and the breadth of the channel makes the water shallow in a dry season.

There are red deer and roe bucks in the mountains, but we found only goats in the road, and had very little entertainment, as we travelled, either for the eye or ear. There are, I fancy, no singing birds in the highlands.

Towards night we came to a very formidable hill, called Rattiken, which we climbed with more difficulty than we had yet experienced, and, at last, came to Glanelg, a place on the seaside, opposite to Skie. We were, by this time, weary and disgusted, nor was our humour much mended by our inn, which, though it was built of lime and slate, the highlander's description of a house, which he thinks magnificent, had neither wine, bread, eggs, nor any thing that we could eat or drink. When we were taken up stairs, a dirty fellow bounced out of the bed, where one of us was to lie. Boswell blustered,

but nothing could be got. At last, a gentleman in the neighbourhood, who heard of our arrival, sent us rum and white sugar. Boswell was now provided for, in part, and the landlord prepared some mutton chops, which we could not eat, and killed two hens of which Boswell made his servant broil a limb; with what effect I know not. We had a lemon and a piece of bread, which supplied me with my supper. When the repast was ended, we began to deliberate upon bed: Mrs. Boswell had warned us, that we should *catch something*, and had given us *sheets*, for our *security*, for ——— and ———, she said, came back from Skie, so scratching themselves. I thought sheets a slender defence against the confederacy with which we were threatened, and, by this time, our highlanders had found a place, where they could get some hay: I ordered hay to be laid thick upon the bed, and slept upon it in my great coat: Boswell laid sheets upon his bed, and reposed in linen, like a gentleman. The horses were turned out to grass, with a man to watch them. The hill Rattiken, and the inn at Glanelg, were the only things of which we, or travellers yet more delicate, could find any pretensions to complain.

Sept. 2nd. I rose, rustling from the hay, and went to tea, which I forget, whether we found or brought. We saw the isle of Skie before us, darkening the horizon with its rocky coast. A boat was procured, and we launched into one of the straits of the Atlantick ocean. We had a passage of about twelve miles to the point where ——— resided, having come from

his seat in the middle of the island, to a small house on the shore, as we believe, that he might, with less reproach, entertain us meanly. If he aspired to meanness, his retrograde ambition was completely gratified, but he did not succeed equally in escaping reproach. He had no cook, nor, I suppose, much provision, nor had the lady the common decencies of her tea-table; we picked up our sugar with our fingers. Boswell was very angry, and reproached him with his improper parsimony; I did not much reflect upon the conduct of a man with whom I was not likely to converse as long at any other time.

You will now expect that I should give you some account of the isle of Skie, of which, though I have been twelve days upon it, I have little to say. It is an island, perhaps, fifty miles long, so much indented by inlets of the sea, that there is no part of it removed from the water more than six-miles. No part, that I have seen, is plain; you are always climbing or descending, and every step is upon rock or mire. A walk upon ploughed ground in England is a dance upon carpets, compared to the toilsome drudgery of wandering in Skie. There is neither town nor village in the island, nor have I seen any house but Macleod's, that is not much below your habitation at Brighthelmstone. In the mountains there are stags and roe bucks, but no hares, and few rabbits; nor have I seen any thing that interested me, as a zoologist, except an otter, bigger than I thought an otter could have been.

You are, perhaps, imagining that I am withdrawing from the gay and the busy world, into regions of peace and pastoral felicity, and am enjoying the relicks of the golden age; that I am surveying nature's magnificence from a mountain, or remarking her minuter beauties on the flowery bank of a winding rivulet; that I am invigorating myself in the sunshine, or delighting my imagination with being hidden from the invasion of human evils and human passions, in the darkness of a thicket; that I am busy in gathering shells and pebbles on the shore, or contemplative on a rock, from which I look upon the water, and consider how many waves are rolling between me and Streatham.

The use of travelling is to regulate imagination by reality, and, instead of thinking how things may be, to see them as they are. Here are mountains which I should once have climbed; but to climb steeps is now very laborious, and to descend them, dangerous; and I am now content with knowing, that, by scrambling up a rock, I shall only see other rocks, and a wider circuit of barren desolation. Of streams, we have here a sufficient number; but they murmur not upon pebbles, but upon rocks. Of flowers, if Chloris herself were here, I could present her only with the bloom of heath. Of lawns and thickets, he must read that would know them, for here is little sun, and no shade. On the sea I look from my window, but am not much tempted to the shore; for since I came to this island, almost every breath of air has been a storm, and, what is worse, a storm

with all its severity, but without its magnificence, for the sea is here so broken into channels, that there is not a sufficient volume of water either for lofty surges, or a loud roar.

On Sept. 6th, we left ———— to visit Raarsa, the island which I have already mentioned. We were to cross part of Skie on horseback; a mode of travelling very uncomfortable, for the road is so narrow, where any road can be found, that only one can go, and so craggy, that the attention can never be remitted; it allows, therefore, neither the gaiety of conversation, nor the laxity of solitude; nor has it, in itself, the amusement of much variety, as it affords only all the possible transpositions of bog, rock, and rivulet. Twelve miles, by computation, make a reasonable journey for a day.

At night we came to a tenant's house, of the first rank of tenants, where we were entertained better than at the landlord's. There were books, both English and Latin. Company gathered about us, and we heard some talk of the second sight, and some talk of the events of forty-five; a year which will not soon be forgotten among the islanders. The next day we were confined by a storm. The company, I think, increased, and our entertainment was not only hospitable, but elegant. At night, a minister's sister, in very fine brocade, sung Erse songs; I wished to know the meaning; but the highlanders are not much used to scholastick questions, and no translations could be obtained.

Next day, Sept. 8th, the weather allowed us to

depart; a good boat was provided us, and we went to Raarsa, under the conduct of Mr. Malcom Macleod, a gentleman who conducted prince Charles through the mountains in his distresses. The prince, he says, was more active than himself; they were, at least, one night without any shelter.

The wind blew enough to give the boat a kind of dancing agitation, and, in about three or four hours, we arrived at Raarsa, where we were met by the laird, and his friends, upon the shore. Raarsa, for such is his title, is master of two islands; upon the smaller of which, called Rona, he has only flocks and herds. Rona gives title to his eldest son. The money which he raises annually by rent from all his dominions, which contain, at least, fifty thousand acres, is not believed to exceed two hundred and fifty pounds; but, as he keeps a large farm in his own hands, he sells, every year, great numbers of cattle, which add to his revenue, and his table is furnished from the farm and from the sea, with very little expense, except for those things this country does not produce, and of those he is very liberal. The wine circulates vigorously; and the tea, chocolate, and coffee, however they are got, are always at hand. I am, &c.

We are this morning trying to get out of Skie.

XXIII.—To Mrs. Thrale

Skie, Sept. 24, 1773

Dear Madam,—I am still in Skie. Do you remember the song,

> "Every island is a prison,
> Strongly guarded by the sea."

We have, at one time, no boat, and, at another, may have too much wind; but, of our reception here, we have no reason to complain. We are now with colonel Macleod, in a more pleasant place than I thought Skie could afford. Now to the narrative.

We were received at Raarsa on the seaside, and after clambering, with some difficulty, over the rocks, a labour which the traveller, wherever he reposes himself on land, must, in these islands, be contented to endure; we were introduced into the house, which one of the company called the court of Raarsa, with politeness, which not the court of Versailles could have thought defective. The house is not large, though we were told, in our passage, that it had eleven fine rooms, nor magnificently furnished; but our utensils were, most commonly, silver. We went up into a dining-room, about as large as your blue room, where we had something given us to eat, and tea and coffee.

Raarsa himself is a man of no inelegant appearance, and of manners uncommonly refined. Lady Raarsa makes no very sublime appearance for a sovereign, but is a good housewife, and a very pru-

dent and diligent conductress of her family. Miss Flora Macleod is a celebrated beauty; has been admired at Edinburgh; dresses her head very high; and has manners so lady-like, that I wish her headdress was lower. The rest of the nine girls are all pretty; the youngest is between Queeney and Lucy. The youngest boy, of four years old, runs barefoot, and wandered with us over the rocks to see a mill: I believe he would walk on that rough ground, without shoes, ten miles in a day.

The laird of Raarsa has sometimes disputed the chieftainry of the clan with Macleod of Skie, but, being much inferiour in extent of possessions, has, I suppose, been forced to desist. Raarsa, and its provinces, have descended to its present possessour, through a succession of four hundred years, without any increase or diminution. It was, indeed, lately in danger of forfeiture, but the old laird joined some prudence with his zeal, and when prince Charles landed in Scotland, made over his estate to this son, the present laird, and led one hundred men of Raarsa into the field, with officers of his own family. Eighty-six only came back after the last battle. The prince was hidden, in his distress, two nights at Raarsa, and the king's troops burnt the whole country, and killed some of the cattle.

You may guess at the opinions that prevail in this country; they are, however, content with fighting for their king; they do not drink for him. We had no foolish healths. At night, unexpectedly to us, who were strangers, the carpet was taken up; the

fiddler of the family came up, and a very vigorous and general dance was begun. As I told you, we were two and thirty at supper; there were full as many dancers; for, though all who supped did not dance, some danced of the young people who did not sup. Raarsa himself danced with his children, and old Malcolm, in his fillibeg, was as nimble, as when he led the prince over the mountains. When they had danced themselves weary, two tables were spread, and, I suppose, at least twenty dishes were upon them. In this country, some preparations of milk are always served up at supper, and sometimes, in the place of tarts, at dinner. The table was not coarsely heaped, but, at once, plentiful and elegant. They do not pretend to make a loaf; there are only cakes, commonly of oats or barley, but they made me very nice cakes of wheat flour. I always sat at the left hand of lady Raarsa; and young Macleod of Skie, the chieftain of the clan, sat on the right.

After supper, a young lady, who was visiting, sung Erse songs, in which lady Raarsa joined, prettily enough, but not gracefully; the young ladies sustained the chorus better. They are very little used to be asked questions, and not well prepared with answers. When one of the songs was over, I asked the princess, that sat next to me, "What is that about?" I question if she conceived that I did not understand it. "For the entertainment of the company," said she. "But, madam, what is the meaning of it?" "It is a love song." This was all the intelligence that I could obtain; nor have I been

able to procure the translation of a single line of Erse.

At twelve it was bed-time. I had a chamber to myself, which, in eleven rooms to forty people, was more than my share. How the company and the family were distributed, is not easy to tell. Macleod, the chieftain, and Boswell, and I, had all single chambers, on the first floor. There remained eight rooms only, for, at least, seven and thirty lodgers. I suppose they put up temporary beds in the dining-room, where they stowed all the young ladies. There was a room above stairs with six beds, in which they put ten men. The rest in my next.

XXIV.—To Mrs. Thrale

Ostich in Skie, Sept. 30, 1773

Dearest Madam,—I am still confined in Skie. We were unskilful travellers, and imagined that the sea was an open road, which we could pass at pleasure; but we have now learned, with some pain, that we may still wait, for a long time, the caprices of the equinoctial winds, and sit reading or writing, as I now do, while the tempest is rolling the sea, or roaring in the mountains. I am now no longer pleased with the delay; you can hear from me but seldom, and I cannot at all hear from you. It comes into my mind, that some evil may happen, or that I might be of use while I am away. But these thoughts are vain; the wind is violent and adverse, and our boat cannot yet come. I must content myself with

writing to you, and hoping that you will sometime receive my letter. Now to my narrative.

Sept. 9th. Having passed the night as is usual, I rose, and found the dining-room full of company; we feasted and talked, and when the evening came it brought musick and dancing. Young Macleod, the great proprietor of Skie, and head of his clan, was very distinguishable; a young man of nineteen, bred awhile at St. Andrew's, and afterwards at Oxford, a pupil of G. Strahan. He is a young man of mind, as much advanced as I have ever known; very elegant of manners, and very graceful in his person. He has the full spirit of a feudal chief; and I was very ready to accept his invitation to Dunvegan. All Raarsa's children are beautiful. The ladies, all, except the eldest, are in the morning dressed in their hair. The true highlander never wears more than a riband on her head, till she is married.

On the third day Boswell went out, with old Malcolm, to see a ruined castle, which he found less entire than was promised, but he saw the country. I did not go, for the castle was, perhaps, ten miles off, and there is no riding at Raarsa, the whole island being rock or mountain, from which the cattle often fall, and are destroyed. It is very barren, and maintains, as near as I could collect, about seven hundred inhabitants, perhaps ten to a square mile. In these countries you are not to suppose that you shall find villages or inclosures. The traveller wanders through a naked desert, gratified sometimes, but rarely, with the sight of cows, and now and then

finds a heap of loose stones and turf, in a cavity between rocks, where a being, born with all those powers which education expands, and all those sensations which culture refines, is condemned to shelter itself from the wind and rain. Philosophers there are, who try to make themselves believe, that this life is happy; but they believe it only while they are saying it, and never yet produced conviction in a single mind; he whom want of words or images sunk into silence still thought, as he thought before, that privation of pleasure can never please, and that content is not to be much envied, when it has no other principle than ignorance of good.

This gloomy tranquillity, which some may call fortitude, and others, wisdom, was, I believe, for a long time, to be very frequently found in these dens of poverty; every man was content to live like his neighbours, and, never wandering from home, saw no mode of life preferable to his own, except at the house of the laird, or the laird's nearest relations, whom he considered as a superiour order of beings, to whose luxuries or honours he had no pretensions. But the end of this reverence and submission seems now approaching; the highlanders have learned, that there are countries less bleak and barren than their own, where, instead of working for the laird, every man will till his own ground, and eat the product of his own labour. Great numbers have been induced, by this discovery, to go, every year, for some time past, to America. Macdonald and Macleod, of Skie, have lost many tenants and many labourers;

but Raarsa has not yet been forsaken by a single inhabitant.

Rona is yet more rocky and barren than Raarsa, and, though it contains, perhaps, four thousand acres, is possessed only by a herd of cattle and the keepers.

I find myself not very able to walk upon the mountains, but one day I went out to see the walls, yet standing, of an ancient chapel. In almost every island the superstitious votaries of the Romish church erected places of worship, in which the drones of convents, or cathedrals, performed the holy offices; but, by the active zeal of protestant devotion, almost all of them have sunk into ruin. The chapel at Raarsa is now only considered as the burying-place of the family, and, I suppose, of the whole island.

We would now have gone away, and left room for others to enjoy the pleasures of this little court; but the wind detained us till the 12th, when, though it was Sunday, we thought it proper to snatch the opportunity of a calm day. Raarsa accompanied us in his six-oared boat, which, he said, was his coach and six. It is, indeed, the vehicle in which the ladies take the air, and pay their visits, but they have taken very little care for accommodations. There is no way, in or out of the boat, for a woman, but by being carried; and in the boat thus dignified with a pompous name, there is no seat, but an occasional bundle of straw. Thus we left Raarsa; the seat of plenty, civility, and cheerfulness.

We dined at a publick house at Port Re; so called, because one of the Scottish kings landed there, in a progress through the western isles. Raarsa paid the reckoning privately. We then got on horseback, and, by a short, but very tedious journey, came to Kingsburgh, at which the same king lodged, after he landed. Here I had the honour of saluting the far-famed Miss Flora Macdonald, who conducted the prince, dressed as her maid, through the English forces, from the island of Lewes; and, when she came to Skie, dined with the English officers, and left her maid below. She must then have been a very young lady; she is now not old; of a pleasing person, and elegant behaviour. She told me, that she thought herself honoured by my visit; and, I am sure, that whatever regard she bestowed on me was liberally repaid. "If thou likest her opinions, thou wilt praise her virtue." She was carried to London, but dismissed without a trial, and came down with Malcolm Macleod, against whom sufficient evidence could not be procured. She and her husband are poor, and are going to try their fortune in America:

"Sic rerum volvitur orbis."

At Kingsburgh we were very liberally feasted, and I slept in the bed in which the prince reposed in his distress; the sheets which he used were never put to any meaner offices, but were wrapped up by the lady of the house, and at last, according to her desire, were laid round her in her grave. These are not whigs.

On the 13th, travelling partly on horseback, where we could not row, and partly on foot, where we could not ride, we came to Dunvegan, which I have described already. Here, though poor Macleod had been left by his grandfather overwhelmed with debts, we had another exhibition of feudal hospitality. There were two stags in the house, and venison came to the table every day in its various forms. Macleod, besides his estate in Skie, larger, I suppose, than some English counties, is proprietor of nine inhabited isles; and, of his islands uninhabited, I doubt if he very exactly knows the number. I told him that he was a mighty monarch. Such dominions fill an Englishman with envious wonder; but, when he surveys the naked mountains, and treads the quaking moor, and wanders over the wild regions of gloomy barrenness, his wonder may continue, but his envy ceases. The unprofitableness of these vast domains can be conceived only by the means of positive instances. The heir of Col, an island not far distant, has lately told me, how wealthy he should be, if he could let Rum, another of his islands, for twopence half-penny an acre; and Macleod has an estate, which the surveyor reports to contain eighty thousand acres, rented at six hundred pounds a year.

While we were at Dunvegan, the wind was high, and the rain violent, so that we were not able to put forth a boat to fish in the sea, or to visit the adjacent islands, which may be seen from the house; but we filled up the time, as we could, sometimes by talk,

sometimes by reading. I have never wanted books in the isle of Skie.

We were invited one day by the laird and lady of Muck, one of the western islands, two miles long, and three quarters of a mile high. He has half his island in his own culture, and upon the other half live one hundred and fifty dependants, who not only live upon the product, but export corn sufficient for the payment of their rent.

Lady Macleod has a son and four daughters; they have lived long in England, and have the language and manners of English ladies. We lived with them very easily. The hospitality of this remote region is like that of the golden age. We have found ourselves treated, at every house, as if we came to confer a benefit.

We were eight days at Dunvegan, but we took the first opportunity which the weather afforded, after the first days, of going away, and, on the 21st, went to Ulinish, where we were well entertained, and wandered a little after curiosities. In the afternoon, an interval of calm sunshine courted us out, to see a cave on the shore, famous for its echo. When we went into the boat, one of our companions was asked, in Erse, by the boatmen, who they were, that came with him. He gave us characters, I suppose, to our advantage, and was asked, in the spirit of the highlands, whether I could recite a long series of ancestors. The boatmen said, as I perceived afterwards, that they heard the cry of an English ghost. This, Boswell says, disturbed him. We came to the

cave, and, clambering up the rocks, came to an arch, open at one end, one hundred and eighty feet long, thirty broad, in the broadest part, and about thirty high. There was no echo: such is the fidelity of report; but I saw, what I had never seen before, muscles and whilks, in their natural state. There was another arch in the rock, open at both ends.

September 23rd. We removed to Talisker, a house occupied by Mr. Macleod, a lieutenant colonel in the Dutch service. Talisker has been long in the possession of gentlemen, and, therefore, has a garden well cultivated, and, what is here very rare, is shaded by trees; a place where the imagination is more amused cannot easily be found. The mountains about it are of great height, with waterfalls succeeding one another so fast, that as one ceases to be heard, another begins. Between the mountains there is a small valley, extending to the sea, which is not far off, beating upon a coast, very difficult of access.

Two nights before our arrival, two boats were driven upon this coast by the tempest; one of them had a pilot that knew the passage; the second followed, but a third missed the true course, and was driven forward, with great danger of being forced into the vast ocean, but, however, gained, at last, some other island. The crews crept to Talisker, almost lifeless with wet, cold, fatigue, and terrour, but the lady took care of them. She is a woman of more than common qualifications; having travelled with her husband, she speaks four languages.

You find, that all the islanders, even in these recesses of life, are not barbarous. One of the ministers, who has adhered to us almost all the time, is an excellent scholar. We have now with us the young laird of Col, who is heir, perhaps, to two hundred square miles of land. He has first studied at Aberdeen, and afterwards gone to Hertfordshire, to learn agriculture, being much impressed with desire of improvement; he, likewise, has the notions of a chief, and keeps a piper. At Macleod's the bagpipe always played, while we were dining.

Col has undertaken, by permission of the waves and wind, to carry us about several of the islands, with which he is acquainted enough to show us whatever curious is given by nature, or left by antiquity; but we grew afraid of deviating from our way home, lest we should be shut up for months upon some little protuberance of rock, that just appears above the sea, and, perhaps, is scarcely marked upon a map.

You remember the doge of Genoa, who being asked, what struck him most at the French court, answered, "myself." I cannot think many things here more likely to affect the fancy, than to see Johnson ending his sixty-fourth year in the wilderness of the Hebrides. But now I am here, it will gratify me very little to return without seeing, or doing my best to see, what those places afford. I have a desire to instruct myself in the whole system of pastoral life, but I know not whether I shall be able to perfect the idea. However, I have many

pictures in my mind, which I could not have had without this journey, and should have passed it with great pleasure, had you, and master, and Queeney, been in the party. We should have excited the attention, and enlarged the observation of each other, and obtained many pleasing topicks of future conversation. As it is, I travel with my mind too much at home, and, perhaps, miss many things worthy of observation, or pass them with transient notice; so that the images, for want of that reimpression which discussion and comparison produce, easily fade away; but I keep a book of remarks, and Boswell writes a regular journal of our travels, which, I think, contains as much of what I say and do, as of all other occurrences together; "for such a faithful chronicler as Griffith."

I hope, dearest madam, you are equally careful to reposit proper memorials of all that happens to you and your family, and then, when we meet, we shall tell our stories. I wish you had gone this summer, in your usual splendour, to Brighthelmstone.

Mr. Thrale probably wonders, how I live all this time without sending to him for money. Travelling in Scotland is dear enough, dearer, in proportion to what the country affords, than in England, but residence in the isles is unexpensive. Company is, I think, considered as a supply of pleasure, and a relief of that tediousness of life which is felt in every place, elegant or rude. Of wine and punch they are very liberal, for they get them cheap; but as there is no custom-house on the island, they can

hardly be considered as smugglers. Their punch is made without lemons, or any substitute.

Their tables are very plentiful; but a very nice man would not be pampered. As they have no meat but as they kill it, they are obliged to live, while it lasts, upon the same flesh. They kill a sheep, and set mutton boiled and roast on the table together. They have fish, both of the sea and of the brooks; but they can hardly conceive that it requires any sauce. To sauce, in general, they are strangers: now and then butter is melted, but I dare not always take, lest I should offend by disliking it. Barley broth is a constant dish, and is made well in every house. A stranger, if he is prudent, will secure his share, for it is not certain that he will be able to eat any thing else.

Their meat, being often newly killed, is very tough, and, as nothing is sufficiently subdued by the fire, is not easily to be eaten. Carving is here a very laborious employment, for the knives are never whetted. Table knives are not of long subsistence in the highlands: every man, while arms were a regular part of dress, had his knife and fork appendant to his dirk. Knives they now lay upon the table, but the handles are apt to show that they have been in other hands, and the blades have neither brightness nor edge.

Of silver, there is no want, and it will last long, for it is never cleaned. They are a nation just rising from barbarity: long contented with necessaries, now somewhat studious of convenience, but

not yet arrived at delicate discriminations. Their linen is, however, both clean and fine. Bread, such as we mean by that name, I have never seen in the isle of Skie. They have ovens, for they bake their pies; but they never ferment their meal, nor mould a loaf. Cakes of oats and barley are brought to the table, but I believe wheat is reserved for strangers. They are commonly too hard for me, and, therefore, I take potatoes to my meat, and am sure to find them on almost every table.

They retain so much of the pastorial life, that some preparation of milk is commonly one of the dishes, both at dinner and supper. Tea is always drunk at the usual times; but, in the morning, the table is polluted with a plate of slices of strong cheese. This is peculiar to the highlands: at Edinburgh there are always honey and sweetmeats on the morning tea-table.

Strong liquors they seem to love. Every man, perhaps, woman, begins the day with a dram; and the punch is made both at dinner and supper.

They have neither wood nor coal for fuel, but burn peat or turf in their chimneys. It is dug out of the moors or mosses, and makes a strong and lasting fire, not always very sweet, and somewhat apt to smoke the pot.

The houses of inferiour gentlemen are very small, and every room serves many purposes. In the bedrooms, perhaps, are laid up stores of different kinds; and the parlour of the day is a bed-room at night. In the room which I inhabited last, about fourteen

feet square, there were three chests of drawers, a long chest for larger clothes, two closet-cupboards, and the bed. Their rooms are commonly dirty, of which they seem to have little sensibility, and if they had more, clean floors would be difficultly kept, where the first step from the door is into the dirt. They are very much inclined to carpets, and seldom fail to lay down something under their feet, better or worse, as they happen to be furnished.

The highland dress, being forbidden by law, is very little used; sometimes it may be seen, but the English traveller is struck with nothing so much as the *nudite des pieds* of the common people.

Skie is the greatest island, or the greatest but one, among the Hebrides. Of the soil, I have already given some account: it is generally barren, but some spots are not wholly unfruitful. The gardens have apples and pears, cherries, strawberries, raspberries, currants, and gooseberries, but all the fruit, that I have seen, is small. They attempt to sow nothing but oats and barley. Oats constitute the bread-corn of the place. Their harvest is about the beginning of October; and, being so late, is very much subject to disappointments from the rains that follow the equinox. This year has been particularly disastrous. Their rainy season lasts from autumn to spring. They have seldom very hard frosts; nor was it ever known that a lake was covered with ice strong enough to bear a skater. The sea round them is always open. The snow falls, but soon melts; only in 1771, they had a cold spring, in which the island was so long covered with it, that

many beasts, both wild and domestick, perished, and the whole country was reduced to distress, from which I know not if it is even yet recovered.

The animals here are not remarkably small; perhaps they recruit their breed from the mainland. The cows are sometimes without horns. The horned and unhorned cattle are not accidental variations, but different species: they will, however, breed together.

October 3rd. The wind is now changed, and if we snatch the moment of opportunity, an escape from this island is become practicable; I have no reason to complain of my reception, yet I long to be again at home.

You and my master may, perhaps, expect, after this description of Skie, some account of myself. My eye is, I am afraid, not fully recovered; my ears are not mended; my nerves seem to grow weaker, and I have been otherwise not as well as I sometimes am, but think myself, lately, better. This climate, perhaps, is not within my degree of healthy latitude.

Thus I have given my most honoured mistress the story of me and my little ramble. We are now going to some other isle, to what we know not; the wind will tell us. I am, &c.

XXV.—To Mrs. Thrale

Mull, Oct. 15, 1773

Dear Madam,—Though I have written to Mr. Thrale, yet having a little more time than was promised me, I would not suffer the messenger to

go without some token of my duty to my mistress, who, I suppose, expects the usual tribute of intelligence, a tribute which I am not very able to pay.

October 3rd. After having been detained, by storms, many days in Skie, we left it, as we thought, with a fair wind; but a violent gust, which Bos. had a great mind to call a tempest, forced us into Col, an obscure island; on which

——————"nulla çampis
Arbor æstíva recreatur aura."

There is literally no tree upon the island; part of it is a sandy waste, over which it would be really dangerous to travel in dry weather, and with a high wind. It seems to be little more than one continued rock, covered, from space to space, with a thin layer of earth. It is, however, according to the highland notion, very populous, and life is improved beyond the manners of Skie; for the huts are collected into little villages, and every one has a small garden of roots and cabbage. The laird has a new house built by his uncle, and an old castle inhabited by his ancestors. The young laird entertained us very liberally; he is heir, perhaps, to three hundred square miles of land, which, at ten shillings an acre, would bring him ninety-six thousand pounds a year. He is desirous of improving the agriculture of his country; and, in imitation of the czar, travelled for improvement, and worked, with his own hands, upon a farm in Hertfordshire, in the neighbourhood of your uncle, sir Thomas Salusbury. He talks of doing

useful things, and has introduced turnips for winter fodder. He has made a small essay towards a road.

Col is but a barren place. Description has here few opportunities of spreading her colours. The difference of day and night is the only vicissitude. The succession of sunshine to rain, or of calms to tempests, we have not known; wind and rain have been our only weather.

At last, after about nine days, we hired a sloop; and having lain in it all night, with such accommodations as these miserable vessels can afford, were landed yesterday on the isle of Mull; from which we expect an easy passage into Scotland. I am sick in a ship, but recover by lying down.

I have not good health; I do not find that travelling much helps me. My nights are flatulent, though not in the utmost degree, and I have a weakness in my knees, which makes me very unable to walk.

Pray, dear madam, let me have a long letter. I am, &c.

XXVI.—To Mrs. Thrale

Inverary, Oct. 24, 1773

Honoured Mistress, — My last letters to you, and my dear master, were written from Mull, the third island of the Hebrides in extent. There is no post, and I took the opportunity of a gentleman's passage to the mainland.

In Mull we were confined two days by the weather; on the third we got on horseback, and,

Painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.

EDWARD GIBBON

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after a journey, difficult and tedious, over rocks naked, and valleys untracked, through a country of barrenness and solitude, we came, almost in the dark, to the seaside, weary and dejected, having met with nothing but water falling from the mountains that could raise any image of delight. Our company was the young laird of Col, and his servant. Col made every Maclean open his house, where he came, and supply us with horses, when we departed; but the horses of this country are small, and I was not mounted to my wish.

At the seaside we found the ferryboat departed; if it had been where it was expected, the wind was against us, and the hour was late, nor was it very desirable to cross the sea, in darkness, with a small boat. The captain of a sloop, that had been driven thither by the storms, saw our distress, and, as we were hesitating and deliberating, sent his boat, which, by Col's order, transported us to the isle of Ulva. We were introduced to Mr. Macquarry, the head of a small clan, whose ancestors have reigned in Ulva beyond memory, but who has reduced himself, by his negligence and folly, to the necessity of selling this venerable patrimony.

On the next morning we passed the strait to Inch Kenneth, an island about a mile in length, and less than half a mile broad; in which Kenneth, a Scottish saint, established a small clerical college, of which the chapel walls are still standing. At this place I beheld a scene, which I wish you, and my master, and Queeney had partaken.

The only family on the island is that of sir Allan, the chief of the ancient and numerous clan of Maclean; the clan which claims the second place, yielding only to Macdonald in the line of battle. Sir Allan, a chieftain, a baronet, and a soldier, inhabits, in this insulated desert, a thatched hut, with no chambers. Young Col, who owns him as his chief, and whose cousin was his lady, had, I believe, given him some notice of our visit; he received us with the soldier's frankness, and the gentleman's elegance, and introduced us to his daughters, two young ladies, who have not wanted education suitable to their birth, and who, in their cottage, neither forgot their dignity, nor affected to remember it. Do not you wish to have been with us ?

Sir Allan's affairs are in disorder, by the fault of his ancestors: and, while he forms some scheme for retrieving them, he has retreated hither.

When our salutations were over, he showed us the island. We walked, uncovered, into the chapel, and saw, in the reverend ruin, the effects of precipitate reformation. The floor is covered with ancient gravestones, of which the inscriptions are not now legible; and without, some of the chief families still continue the right of sepulture. The altar is not yet quite demolished; beside it, on the right side, is a bass-relief of the virgin with her child, and an angel hovering over her. On the other side still stands a hand-bell, which, though it has no clapper, neither presbyterian bigotry, nor barbarian wantonness, has yet taken away. The chapel is thirty-eight feet long,

and eighteen broad. Boswell, who is very pious, went into it at night, to perform his devotions, but came back, in haste, for fear of spectres. Near the chapel is a fountain, to which the water, remarkably pure, is conveyed from a distant hill, through pipes laid by the Romish clergy, which still perform the office of conveyance, though they have never been repaired, since popery was suppressed.

We soon after went in to dinner, and wanted neither the comforts nor the elegancies of life. There were several dishes, and variety of liquors. The servants live in another cottage; in which, I suppose, the meat is dressed.

Towards evening, sir Allan told us, that Sunday never passed over him, like another day. One of the ladies read, and read very well, the evening service;—and paradise was opened in the wild.

Next day, 18th, we went and wandered among the rocks on the shore, while the boat was busy in catching oysters, of which there is a great bed. Oysters lie upon the sand, one, I think, sticking to another, and cockles are found a few inches under the sand.

We then went in the boat to Sondiland, a little island very near. We found it a wild rock, of about ten acres; part naked, part covered with sand, out of which we picked shells; and part clothed with a thin layer of mould, on the grass of which a few sheep are sometimes fed. We then came back and dined. I passed part of the afternoon in reading, and in the evening one of the ladies played on her harpsichord,

and Boswell and Col danced a reel with the other.

On the 19th, we persuaded sir Allan to lanch his boat again, and go with us to Icolmkill, where the first great preacher of christianity to the Scots built a church, and settled a monastery. In our way we stopped to examine a very uncommon cave on the coast of Mull. We had some difficulty to make our way over the vast masses of broken rocks that lie before the entrance, and at the mouth were embarrassed with stones, which the sea had accumulated, as at Brighthelmstone; but, as we advanced, we reached a floor of soft sand, and, as we left the light behind us, walked along a very spacious cavity, vaulted over head with an arch almost regular, by which a mountain was sustained, at least a very lofty rock. From this magnificent cavern, went a narrow passage to the right hand, which we entered with a candle; and though it was obstructed with great stones, clambered over them to a second expansion of the cave, in which there lies a great square stone, which might serve as a table. The air here was very warm, but not oppressive, and the flame of the candle continued pyramidal. The cave goes onward to an unknown extent, but we were now one hundred and sixty yards under ground; we had but one candle, and had never heard of any that went farther and came back; we, therefore, thought it prudent to return.

Going forward in our boat, we came to a cluster of rocks, black and horrid, which sir Allan chose

for the place where he would eat his dinner. We climbed till we got seats. The stores were opened, and the repast taken.

We then entered the boat again; the night came upon us; the wind rose; the sea swelled; and Boswell desired to be set on dry ground: we, however, pursued our navigation, and passed by several little islands in the silent solemnity of faint moonshine, seeing little, and hearing only the wind and the water. At last, we reached the island, the venerable seat of ancient sanctity; where secret piety reposed, and where falling greatness was reposited. The island has no house of entertainment, and we manfully made our bed in a farmer's barn. The description I hope to give you another time. I am, &c.

XXVII.—To Mrs. Thrale

Edinburgh, Nov. 12, 1773

Dearest Madam,—Among the possibilities of evil, which my imagination suggested at this distance, I missed that which has really happened. I never had much hope of a will in your favour, but was willing to believe that no will would have been made. The event is now irrevocable; it remains only to bear it. Not to wish it had been different, is impossible; but as the wish is painful without use, it is not prudent, perhaps, not lawful, to indulge it. As life, and vigour of mind, and sprightliness of imagination, and flexibility of attention, are given us for valuable and useful purposes, we must not think ourselves at liberty to squander life, to enervate

intellectual strength, to cloud our thoughts, or fix our attention, when, by all this expense, we know that no good can be produced. Be alone as little as you can; when you are alone, do not suffer your thoughts to dwell on what you might have done, to prevent this disappointment. You, perhaps, could not have done what you imagine, or might have done it without effect. But even to think in the most reasonable manner, is, for the present, not so useful, as not to think. Remit yourself solemnly into the hands of God, and then turn your mind upon the business and amusements which lie before you. "All is best," says Chene, "as it has been, excepting the errours of our own free will." Burton concludes his long book upon Melancholy, with this important precept: "Be not solitary; be not idle." Remember Chene's position, and observe Burton's precept.

We came hither on the ninth of this month. I long to come under your care, but, for some days, cannot decently get away. They congratulate our return, as if we had been with Phipps, or Banks; I am ashamed of their salutations.

I have been able to collect very little for Queeney's cabinet; but she will not want toys now, she is so well employed. I wish her success; and am not without some thought of becoming her schoolfellow. I have got an Italian Rasselas.

Surely my dear Lucy will recover; I wish, I could do her good. I love her very much; and should love another godchild, if I might have the honour of standing to the next baby. I am, &c.

XXVIII. — To Mrs. Thrale

Edinburgh, Nov. 18, 1773

My Dearest Mistress, — This is the last letter that I shall write; while you are reading it, I shall be coming home.

I congratulate you upon your boy; but you must not think that I will love him, all at once, as well as I love Harry; for Harry, you know, is so rational. I shall love him by degrees.

Poor, pretty, dear Lucy! Can nothing do her good? I am sorry to lose her. But, if she must be taken from us, let us resign her, with confidence, into the hands of him who knows, and who only knows, what is best both for us and her.

Do not suffer yourself to be dejected. Resolution and diligence will supply all that is wanting, and all that is lost. But if your health should be impaired, I know not where to find a substitute. I shall have no mistress; Mr. Thrale will have no wife; and the little flock will have no mother.

I long to be home, and have taken a place in the coach for Monday; I hope, therefore, to be in London on Friday, the 26th, in the evening. Please to let Mrs. Williams know. I am, &c.

XXIX. — To the same

Lichfield, June 23, 1775

Dear Madam, — Now I hope you are thinking: Shall I have a letter to-day from Lichfield? Something of a letter you will have; how else can I

expect that you should write? and the morning, on which I should miss a letter, would be a morning of uneasiness, notwithstanding all that would be said or done by the sisters of Stowhill, who do and say whatever good they can. They give me good words, and cherries, and strawberries. Lady ****, and her mother and sister, were visiting there yesterday, and Lady **** took her tea before her mother.

Mrs. Cobb is to come to Miss Porter's this afternoon. Miss A——— comes little near me. Mr. Langley, of Ashbourne, was here to-day, in his way to Birmingham, and every body talks of you.

The ladies of the Amicable society are to walk, in a few days, from the townhall to the cathedral, in procession, to hear a sermon. They walk in linen gowns, and each has a stick, with an acorn; but for the acorn they could give no reason, till I told them of the civick crown.

I have just had your sweet letter, and am glad that you are to be at the regatta. You know how little I love to have you left out of any shining part of life. You have every right to distinction, and should, therefore, be distinguished. You will see a show with philosophick superiority, and, therefore, may see it safely. It is easy to talk of sitting at home, contented, when others are seeing, or making shows. But, not to have been where it is supposed, and seldom supposed falsely, that all would go if they could; to be able to say nothing,

when every one is talking; to have no opinion, when every one is judging; to hear exclamations of rapture, without power to depress; to listen to falsehoods, without right to contradict, is, after all, a state of temporary inferiority, in which the mind is rather hardened by stubbornness, than supported by fortitude. If the world be worth winning, let us enjoy it; if it is to be despised, let us despise it by conviction. But the world is not to be despised, but as it is compared with something better. Company is, in itself, better than solitude, and pleasure better than indolence: "Ex nihilo nihil fit," says the moral, as well as the natural, philosopher. By doing nothing, and by knowing nothing, no power of doing good can be obtained. He must mingle with the world, that desires to be useful. Every new scene impresses new ideas, enriches the imagination, and enlarges the power of reason, by new topicks of comparison. You, that have seen the regatta, will have images, which we, who miss it, must want; and no intellectual images are without use. But, when you are in this scene of splendour and gaiety, do not let one of your fits of negligence steal upon you. "Hoc age," is the great rule, whether you are serious or merry; whether you are stating the expenses of your family, learning science, or duty, from a folio, or floating on the Thames in a fancied dress. Of the whole entertainment, let me not hear so copious, nor so true an account, from any body as from you. I am, dearest madam, your, &c.

XXX.—To Mrs. Thrale

Ashbourne

Dear Madam,—I am sure I write and write, and every letter that comes from you charges me with not writing. Since I wrote to Queeney I have written twice to you, on the 6th and the 9th: be pleased to let me know whether you have them, or have them not. That of the 6th you should regularly have had on the 8th, yet your letter of the 9th seems not to mention it; all this puzzles me.

Poor dear ****! He only grows dull, because he is sickly; age has not yet begun to impair him; nor is he such a chameleon as to take immediately the colour of his company. When you see him again you will find him reanimated. Most men have their bright and their cloudy days; at least they have days when they put their powers into action, and days when they suffer them to repose.

Fourteen thousand pounds make a sum sufficient for the establishment of a family, and which, in whatever flow of riches or confidence of prosperity, deserves to be very seriously considered. I hope a great part of it has paid debts, and no small part bought land. As for gravelling, and walling, and digging, though I am not much delighted with them, yet something, indeed much, must be allowed to every man's taste. He that is growing rich has a right to enjoy part of the growth his own way. I hope to range in the walk, and row upon the water, and devour fruit from the wall.

Dr. Taylor wants to be gardening. He means to buy a piece of ground in the neighbourhood, and surround it with a wall, and build a gardener's house upon it, and have fruit, and be happy. Much happiness it will not bring him; but what can he do better? If I had money enough, what would I do? Perhaps, if you and master did not hold me, I might go to Cairo, and down the Red sea to Bengal, and take a ramble in India. Would this be better than building and planting? It would surely give more variety to the eye, and more amplitude to the mind. Half fourteen thousand would send me out to see other forms of existence, and bring me back to describe them.

I answered this the day on which I had yours of the 9th, that is on the 11th. Let me know when it comes. I am, &c.

XXXI.—To Mrs. Thrale

Lichfield, August 2, 1775

Madam,—I dined to-day at Stowhill, and am come away to write my letter. Never, surely, was I such a writer before. Do you keep my letters? I am not of your opinion, that I shall not like to read them hereafter; for though there is in them not much history of mind, or anything else, they will, I hope, always be, in some degree, the records of a pure and blameless friendship, and, in some hours of languor and sadness, may revive the memory of more cheerful times.

Why you should suppose yourself not desirous hereafter to read the history of your own mind, I do not see. Twelve years, on which you now look, as on a vast expanse of life, will, probably, be passed over uniformly and smoothly, with very little perception of your progress, and with very few remarks upon the way. The accumulation of knowledge, which you promise to yourself, by which the future is to look back upon the present, with the superiority of manhood to infancy, will, perhaps, never be attempted, or never will be made; and you will find, as millions have found before you, that forty-five has made little sensible addition to thirty-three.

As the body, after a certain time, gains no increase of height, and little of strength, there is, likewise, a period, though more variable by external causes, when the mind commonly attains its stationary point, and very little advances its powers of reflection, judgment, and ratiocination. The body may acquire new modes of motion, or new dexterities of mechanick operations, but its original strength receives not improvement: the mind may be stored with new languages, or new sciences, but its power of thinking remains nearly the same, and, unless it attains new subjects of meditation, it commonly produces thoughts of the same force and the same extent, at very distant intervals of life; as the tree, unless a foreign fruit be ingrafted, gives, year after year, productions of the same form, and the same flavour.

By intellectual force, or strength of thought, is

meant the degree of power which the mind possesses of surveying the subject of meditation, with its circuit of concomitants, and its train of dependence.

Of this power, which all observe to be very different in different minds, part seems the gift of nature, and part the acquisition of experience. When the powers of nature have attained their intended energy, they can be no more advanced. The shrub can never become a tree. And it is not unreasonable to suppose, that they are, before the middle of life, in their full vigour.

Nothing then remains but practice and experience; and, perhaps, why they do so little, may be worth inquiry.

But I have just now looked, and find it so late, that I will inquire against the next post night. I am, &c.

XXXII.—To Mrs. Thrale

Lichfield, August 5, 1775

Dear Madam,—Instead of forty reasons for my return, one is sufficient,—that you wish for my company. I purpose to write no more till you see me. The ladies at Stowhill and Greenhill are unanimously of opinion, that it will be best to take a post chaise, and not to be troubled with the vexations of a common carriage. I will venture to suppose the ladies at Streatham to be of the same mind.

You will now expect to be told, why you will not be so much wiser, as you expect, when you have lived twelve years longer.

It is said, and said truly, that experience is the best teacher; and it is supposed, that, as life is lengthened, experience is increased. But a closer inspection of human life will discover, that time often passes without any incident which can much enlarge knowledge, or ratify judgment. When we are young we learn much, because we are universally ignorant; we observe every thing, because every thing is new. But, after some years, the occurrences of daily life are exhausted; one day passes like another, in the same scene of appearances, in the same course of transactions: we have to do what we have often done, and what we do not try, because we do not wish to do much better; we are told what we already know, and, therefore, what repetition cannot make us know with greater certainty.

He that has early learned much, perhaps, seldom makes, with regard to life and manners, much addition to his knowledge; not only, because, as more is known, there is less to learn, but because a mind, stored with images and principles, turns inwards for its own entertainment, and is employed in settling those ideas, which run into confusion, and in recollecting those which are stealing away; practices by which wisdom may be kept, but not gained. The merchant, who was at first busy in acquiring money, ceases to grow richer, from the time when he makes it his business only to count it.

Those who have families, or employments, are engaged in business of little difficulty, but of great importance, requiring rather assiduity of practice

than subtilty of speculation, occupying the attention with images too bulky for refinement, and too obvious for research. The right is already known: what remains is only to follow it. Daily business adds no more to wisdom, than daily lesson to the learning of the teacher. But of how few lives does not stated duty claim the greater part!

Far the greater part of human minds never endeavour their own improvement. Opinions, once received from instruction, or settled by whatever accident, are seldom recalled to examination; having been once supposed to be right, they are never discovered to be erroneous, for no application is made of any thing that time may present, either to shake or to confirm them. From this acquiescence in preconceptions none are wholly free; between fear of uncertainty, and dislike of labour, every one rests while he might yet go forward; and they that were wise at thirty-three, are very little wiser at forty-five.

Of this speculation you are, perhaps, tired, and would rather hear of Sophy. I hope, before this comes, that her head will be easier, and your head less filled with fears and troubles, which you know are to be indulged only to prevent evil, not to increase it.

Your uneasiness about Sophy is, probably, unnecessary, and, at worst, your own children are healthful, and your affairs prosperous. Unmingled good cannot be expected; but, as we may lawfully gather all the good within our reach, we may be

allowed to lament after that which we lose. I hope your losses are at an end, and that, as far as the condition of our present existence permits, your remaining life will be happy. I am, &c.

XXXIII.—To Mrs. Thrale

Lichfield, March 25, 1776

Dear Madam,—This letter will not, I hope, reach you many days before me; in a distress which can be so little relieved, nothing remains for a friend, but to come and partake it.

Poor, dear, sweet little boy! When I read the letter this day to Mrs. Aston, she said, "such a death is the next to translation." Yet, however I may convince myself of this, the tears are in my eyes, and yet I could not love him as you loved him, nor reckon upon him for a future comfort, as you and his father reckoned upon him.

He is gone, and we are going! We could not have enjoyed him long, and shall not long be separated from him. He has, probably, escaped many such pangs as you are now feeling.

Nothing remains, but that, with humble confidence, we resign ourselves to almighty goodness, and fall down, without irreverent murmurs, before the sovereign distributer of good and evil, with hope, that though sorrow endureth for a night, yet joy may come in the morning.

I have known you, madam, too long to think that you want any arguments for submission to the supreme will; nor can my consolation have any effect,

but that of showing that I wish to comfort you. What can be done, you must do for yourself. Remember first, that your child is happy; and then, that he is safe, not only from the ills of this world, but from those more formidable dangers which extend their mischief to eternity. You have brought into the world a rational being; have seen him happy during the little life that has been granted him; and can have no doubt but that his happiness is now permanent and immutable.

When you have obtained, by prayer, such tranquillity as nature will admit, force your attention, as you can, upon your accustomed duties and accustomed entertainments. You can do no more for our dear boy, but you must not, therefore, think less on those whom your attention may make fitter for the place to which he is gone. I am, dearest, dearest madam, your most affectionate humble servant.

XXXIV. — To Mrs. Thrale

Sept. 6, 1777

Dearest Lady,—It is true, that I have loitered, and, what is worse, loitered with very little pleasure. The time has run away, as most time runs, without account, without use, and without memorial. But, to say this of a few weeks, though not pleasing, might be borne; but what ought to be the regret of him who, in a few days, will have so nearly the same to say of sixty-eight years? But complaint is vain.

If you have nothing to say from the neighbourhood of the metropolis, what can occur to me, in

little cities and petty towns; in places which we have both seen, and of which no description is wanted? I have left part of the company with which you dined here, to come and write this letter, in which I have nothing to tell, but that my nights are very tedious. I cannot persuade myself to forbear trying something.

As you have now little to do, I suppose you are pretty diligent at the Thraliana; and a very curious collection posterity will find it. Do not remit the practice of writing down occurrences as they arise, of whatever kind, and be very punctual in annexing the dates. Chronology, you know, is the eye of history; and every man's life is of importance to himself. Do not omit painful casualties, or unpleasing passages; they make the variegation of existence; and there are many transactions, of which I will not promise, with Æneas, "et hæc olim meminisse juvabit;" yet that rememberance which is not pleasant, may be useful. There is, however, an intemperate attention to slight circumstances, which is to be avoided, lest a great part of life be spent in writing the history of the rest. Every day, perhaps, has something to be noted; but in a settled and uniform course, few days can have much.

Why do I write all this, which I had no thought of when I began! The Thraliana drove it all into my head. It deserves, however, an hour's reflection, to consider how, with the least loss of time, the loss of what we wish to retain may be prevented.

Do not neglect to write to me, for when a post comes empty, I am really disappointed.

Boswell, I believe, will meet me here. I am, dearest lady, your, &c.

XXXV.—To Mrs. Thrale

Lichfield, October 3, 1777

Dear Madam,—This is the last time that I shall write, in this excursion, from this place. To-morrow I shall be, I hope, at Birmingham; from which place I shall do my best to find the nearest way home. I come home, I think, worse than I went; and do not like the state of my health. But, "vive hodie," make the most of life. I hope to get better, and—sweep the cobwebs. But I have sad nights. Mrs. Aston has sent me to Mr. Greene, to be cured.

Did you see Foote at Brighthelmstone? — Did you think he would so soon be gone? — Life, says Falstaff, is a shuttle. He was a fine fellow in his way; and the world is really impoverished by his sinking glories. Murphy ought to write his life, at least, to give the world a Footeiana. Now, will any of his contemporaries bewail him? Will genius change *his sex* to weep? I would really have his life written with diligence.

It will be proper for me to work pretty diligently now for some time. I hope to get through, though so many weeks have passed. Little lives and little criticisms may serve.

Having been in the country so long, with very little to detain me, I am rather glad to look homewards. I am, &c.

XXXVI.—To Mrs. Thrale

October 13, 1777

Dear Madam,—Yet I do love to hear from you: such pretty, kind letters as you send. But it gives me great delight to find that my master misses me. I begin to wish myself with you more than I should do, if I were wanted less. It is a good thing to stay away, till one's company is desired, but not so good to stay, after it is desired.

You know I have some work to do. I did not set to it very soon; and if I should go up to London with nothing done, what would be said, but that I was——who can tell what? I, therefore, stay till I can bring up something to stop their mouths, and then——

Though I am still at Ashbourne, I receive your dear letters, that come to Lichfield, and you continue that direction, for I think to get thither as soon as I can.

One of the does died yesterday, and I am afraid her fawn will be starved; I wish Miss Thrale had it to nurse; but the doctor is now all for cattle, and minds very little either does or hens.

How did you and your aunt part? Did you turn her out of doors, to begin your journey? or did she leave you by her usual shortness of visits? I love to know how you go on.

I cannot but think on your kindness and my master's. Life has, upon the whole, fallen short, very short, of my early expectation; but the acquisition of such a friendship, at an age, when new friendships are seldom acquired, is something better than the general course of things gives man a right to expect. I think on it with great delight: I am not very apt to be delighted. I am, &c.

XXXVII.—To Mrs. Thrale

Lichfield, October 27, 1777

Dear Madam,—You talk of writing and writing, as if you had all the writing to yourself. If our correspondence were printed, I am sure posterity, for posterity is always the author's favourite, would say that I am a good writer too.—"Anch'io sono pittore." To sit down so often with nothing to say; to say something so often, almost without consciousness of saying, and without any remembrance of having said, is a power of which I will not violate my modesty by boasting, but I do not believe that every body has it.

Some, when they write to their friends, are all affection; some are wise and sententious; some strain their powers for efforts of gaiety; some write news, and some write secrets; but to make a letter without affection, without wisdom, without gaiety, without news, and without a secret, is, doubtless, the great epistolick art.

In a man's letters, you know, madam, his soul lies naked, his letters are only the mirror of his breast;

whatever passes within him, is shown, undisguised, in its natural process; nothing is inverted, nothing distorted: you see systems in their elements; you discover actions in their motives.

Of this great truth, sounded by the knowing to the ignorant, and so echoed by the ignorant to the knowing, what evidence have you now before you? Is not my soul laid open in these veracious pages? Do not you see me reduced to my first principles? This is the pleasure of corresponding with a friend, where doubt and distrust have no place, and every thing is said as it is thought. The original idea is laid down in its simple purity, and all the supervenient conceptions are spread over it, "stratum super stratum," as they happen to be formed. These are the letters by which souls are united, and by which minds, naturally in unison, move each other, as they are moved themselves. I know, dearest lady, that in the perusal of this, such is the consanguinity of our intellects, you will be touched, as I am touched. I have, indeed, concealed nothing from you, nor do I expect ever to repent of having thus opened my heart. I am, &c.

XXXVIII.—To Mrs. Thrale

November 10, 1777

Dear Madam,—And so, supposing that I might come to town, and neglect to give you notice, or thinking some other strange thought, but certainly thinking wrong, you fall to writing about me to Tom Davies, as if he could tell you anything that I would

not have you know. As soon as I came hither, I let you know of my arrival; and the consequence is, that I am summoned to Brighthelmstone, through storms, and cold, and dirt, and all the hardships of wintry journeys. You know my natural dread of all those evils; yet, to show my master an example of compliance, and to let you know how much I long to see you, and to boast how little I give way to disease, my purpose is to be with you on Friday.

I am sorry for poor Nezzy, and hope she will, in time, be better; I hope the same for myself. The rejuvenescency of Mr. Scrase gives us both reason to hope, and, therefore, both of us rejoice in his recovery. I wish him well, besides, as a friend to my master.

I am just come home from not seeing my lord mayor's show, but I might have seen, at least, part of it. But I saw Miss Wesley and her brothers; she sends her compliments. Mrs. Williams is come home, I think, a very little better.

Every body was an enemy to that wig.—We will burn it, and get drunk; for what is joy without drink? Wagers are laid in the city about our success, which is yet, as the French call it, problematical. Well — but, seriously, I think, I shall be glad to see you in your own hair; but do not take too much time in combing, and twisting, and papering, and unpapering, and curling, and frizling, and powdering, and getting out the powder, with all the other operations required in the cultivation of a head of hair; yet let it be combed, at least, once in three months, on the quarterday.— I

could wish it might be combed once, at least, in six weeks; if I were to indulge my wishes, but what are wishes without hopes, I should fancy the operation performed—one knows not when one has enough—perhaps, every morning. I am, dearest lady, your, &c.

XXXIX.—To Mrs. Thrale

Ashbourne, June 14, 1779

Dear Madam,—Your account of Mr. Thrale's illness is very terrible; but when I remember that he seems to have it peculiar to his constitution, that, whatever distemper he has, he always has his head affected, I am less frighted. The seizure was, I think, not apoplectical, but hysterical, and, therefore, not dangerous to life. I would have you, however, consult such physicians as you think you can best trust. Broomfield seems to have done well, and, by his practice, appears not to suspect an apoplexy. This is a solid and fundamental comfort. I remember Dr. Marsigli, an Italian physician, whose seizure was more violent than Mr. Thrale's, for he fell down helpless, but his case was not considered as of much danger, and he went safe home, and is now a professor at Padua. His fit was considered as only hysterical.

I hope sir Philip, who franked your letter, comforts you, as well as Mr. Seward. If I can comfort you, I will come to you; but I hope you are now no longer in want of any help to be happy. I am, &c.

The doctor sends his compliments; he is one of the people that are growing old.

XL.—To Mrs. Thrale

Ashbourne, June 14, 1779

Dear Madam,—How near we are all to extreme danger. We are merry or sad, or busy or idle, and forget that death is hovering over us. You are a dear lady for writing again. The case, as you now describe it, is worse than I conceived it, when I read your first letter. It is still, however, not apoplectick, but seems to have something worse than hysterical—a tendency to a palsy, which, I hope, however, is now over. I am glad that you have Haberden, and hope we are all safer. I am the more alarmed by this violent seizure, as I can impute it to no wrong practices, or intemperance of any kind, and, therefore, know not how any defence or preservative can be obtained. Mr. Thrale has, certainly, less exercise than when he followed the foxes; but he is very far from unwieldiness or inactivity, and further still from any vitious or dangerous excess. I fancy, however, he will do well to ride more.

Do, dear madam, let me know, every post, how he goes on. Such sudden violence is very dreadful; we know not by what it is let loose upon us, nor by what its effects are limited.

If my coming can either assist or divert, or be useful to any purpose, let me but know: I will soon be with you.

Mrs. Kennedy, Queeney's Baucis, ended, last

week, a long life of disease and poverty. She had been married about fifty years.

Dr. Taylor is not much amiss, but always complaining. I am, &c.

XLI.—To Mr. Thrale

Lichfield, June 23, 1779

Dear Sir,—To show how well I think of your health, I have sent you a hundred pounds, to keep for me. It will come within one day of quarterday, and that day you must give me. I came by it in a very uncommon manner, and would not confound it with the rest.

My wicked mistress talks as if she thought it possible for me to be indifferent or negligent about your health or hers. If I could have done any good, I had not delayed an hour to come to you; and I will come very soon, to try if my advice can be of any use, or my company of any entertainment.

What can be done, you must do for yourself: do not let any uneasy thought settle in your mind. Cheerfulness and exercise are your great remedies. Nothing is, for the present, worth your anxiety. "Vivite læti" is one of the great rules of health. I believe it will be good to ride often, but never to weariness, for weariness is, itself, a temporary resolution of the nerves, and is, therefore, to be avoided. Labour is exercise continued to fatigue —exercise is labour used only, while it produces pleasure.

Above all, keep your mind quiet: do not think with earnestness even of your health; but think on such things as may please without too much agitation; among which, I hope, is, dear sir, your, &c.

XLII.—To Mrs. Thrale

Dear Madam,—On Sunday I dined with poor Lawrence, who is deafer than ever. When he was told that Dr. Moisy visited Mr. Thrale, he inquired for what? and said there was nothing to be done, which nature would not do for herself. On Sunday evening, I was at Mrs. Vesy's, and there was inquiry about my master, but I told them all good. There was Dr. Bernard of Eton, and we made a noise all the evening; and there was Pepys, and Wraxal, till I drove him away. And I have no loss of my mistress, who laughs, and frisks, and frolicks it all the long day, and never thinks of poor Colin.

If Mr. Thrale will but continue to mend, we shall, I hope, come together again, and do as good things as ever we did; but, perhaps, you will be made too proud to heed me, and yet, as I have often told you, it will not be easy for you to find such another.

Queeney has been a good girl, and wrote me a letter; if Burney said she would write, she told you a fib. She writes nothing to me. She can write home fast enough. I have a good mind not to let her know that Dr. Bernard, to whom I had recommended her novel, speaks of it with great commendation, and that the copy which she lent me, has been read by Dr. Lawrence three times over. And yet what a

gipsy it is. She no more minds me than if I were a Brangton. Pray speak to Queeney to write again.

I have had a cold and a cough, and taken opium, and think I am better. We have had very cold weather; bad riding weather for my master, but he will surmount it all. Did Mrs. Browne make any reply to your comparison of business with solitude, or did you quite down her? I am much pleased to think that Mrs. Cotton thinks me worth a frame, and a place upon her wall; her kindness was hardly within my hope, but time does wonderful things. All my fear is, that if I should come again, my print would be taken down. I fear I shall never hold it.

Who dines with you? Do you see Dr. Woodward, or Dr. Harrington? Do you go to the house where they write for the myrtle? You are at all places of high resort, and bring home hearts by dozens; while I am seeking for something to say about men, of whom I know nothing, but their verses, and, sometimes, very little of them. Now I have begun, however, I do not despair of making an end. Mr. Nichols holds, that Addison is the most taking of all that I have done. I doubt they will not be done, before you come away.

Now you think yourself the first writer in the world for a letter about nothing. Can you write such a letter as this? So miscellaneous, with such noble disdain of regularity, like Shakespeare's works; such graceful negligence of transition, like the ancient enthusiasts? The pure voice of nature and of friendship. Now, of whom shall I proceed to speak? Of

whom but Mrs. Montague? Having mentioned Shakespeare and nature, does not the name of Montague force itself upon me? Such were the transitions of the ancients, which now seem abrupt, because the intermediate idea is lost to modern understandings. I wish her name had connected itself with friendship; but, ah, Colin, thy hopes are in vain! One thing, however, is left me, I have still to complain; but I hope I shall not complain much, while you have any kindness for me. I am, dearest, and dearest madam, your, &c.

London, April 11, 1780.

XLIII.—To Mrs. Thrale

Dearest Madam,—Mr. Thrale never will live abstinently, till he can persuade himself to abstain by rule. I lived on potatoes on Friday, and on spinage to-day; but I have had, I am afraid, too many dinners of late. I took physick too both days, and hope to fast to-morrow. When he comes home, we will shame him, and Jebb shall scold him into regularity. I am glad, however, that he is always one of the company, and that my dear Queeney is again another. Encourage, as you can, the musical girl.

Nothing is more common than mutual dislike, where mutual approbation is particularly expected. There is often on both sides a vigilance, not over-benevolent; and as attention is strongly excited, so that nothing drops unheeded, any difference in taste or opinion, and some difference, where there is no

restraint, will commonly appear, immediately generates dislike.

Never let criticisms operate upon your face, or your mind; it is very rarely that an author is hurt by his criticks. The blaze of reputation cannot be blown out, but it often dies in the socket; a very few names may be considered as perpetual lamps, that shine unconsumed. From the author of Fitzosborne's Letters, I cannot think myself in much danger. I met him only once, about thirty years ago, and, in some small dispute, reduced him to whistle; having not seen him since, that is the last impression. Poor Moore, the fabulist, was one of the company.

Mrs. Montague's long stay, against her own inclination, is very convenient. You would, by your own confession, want a companion; and she is "par pluribus," conversing with her you may "find variety in one."

At Mrs. Ord's I met one Mrs. B———, a travelled lady, of great spirit, and some consciousness of her own abilities. We had a contest of gallantry, an hour long, so much to the diversion of the company, that at Ramsay's, last night, in a crowded room, they would have pitted us again. There were Smelt, and the bishop of St. Asaph, who comes to every place; and lord Monboddo, and sir Joshua, and ladies out of tale.

The exhibition, how will you do either to see or not to see! The exhibition is eminently splendid. There is contour, and keeping, and grace, and expression, and all the varieties of artificial excellence.

The apartments were truly very noble. The pictures, for the sake of a skylight, are at the top of the house; there we dined, and I sat over against the archbishop of York. See how I live, when I am not under petticoat government. I am, &c.

London, May 1, 1780

XLIV.—To Mrs. Thrale

London, June 9, 1780

Dear Madam,—To the question, Who was impressed with consternation? it may, with great truth, be answered, that every body was impressed, for nobody was sure of his safety.

On Friday, the good protestants met in St. George's fields, at the summons of lord George Gordon, and marching to Westminster, insulted the lords and commons, who all bore it with great tameness. At night, the outrages began, by the demolition of the mass-house by Lincoln's inn.

An exact journal of a week's defiance of government, I cannot give you. On Monday, Mr. Strahan, who had been insulted, spoke to lord Mansfield, who had, I think, been insulted too, of the licentiousness of the populace; and his lordship treated it, as a very slight irregularity. On Tuesday night, they pulled down Fielding's house, and burnt his goods in the street. They had gutted, on Monday, sir George Saville's house, but the building was saved. On Tuesday evening, leaving Fielding's ruins, they went to Newgate, to demand their companions, who had been seized, demolishing the

chapel. The keeper could not release them, but by the mayor's permission, which he went to ask; at his return, he found all the prisoners released, and Newgate in a blaze. They then went to Bloomsbury, and fastened upon lord Mansfield's house, which they pulled down; and as for his goods, they totally burnt them. They have since gone to Caen wood, but a guard was there before them. They plundered some papists, I think, and burnt a mass-house in Moorfields the same night.

On Wednesday, I walked with Dr. Scott, to look at Newgate, and found it in ruins, with the fire yet glowing. As I went by, the protestants were plundering the Sessions house at the Old Bailey. There were not, I believe, a hundred; but they did their work at leisure, in full security, without sentinels, without trepidation, as men lawfully employed in full day. Such is the cowardice of a commercial place. On Wednesday they broke open the Fleet, and the King's Bench, and the Marshalsea, and Wood street Counter, and Clerkenwell Bridewell, and released all the prisoners.

At night, they set fire to the Fleet, and to the King's Bench, and I know not how many other places; and one might see the glare of conflagration fill the sky from many parts. The sight was dreadful. Some people were threatened; Mr. Strahan advised me to take care of myself. Such a time of terrour you have been happy in not seeing.

The king said, in council, that the magistrates had not done their duty, but that he would do his own;

and a proclamation was published, directing us to keep our servants within doors, as the peace was now to be preserved by force. The soldiers were sent out to different parts, and the town is now at quiet.

What has happened at your house, you will know; the harm is only a few butts of beer; and I think you may be sure that the danger is over. There is a body of soldiers at St. Margaret's hill.

Of Mr. Tyson I know nothing, nor can guess to what he can allude; but I know that a young fellow of little more than seventy is naturally an unresisted conqueror of hearts.

Pray tell Mr. Thrale that I live here and have no fruit, and if he does not interpose, am not likely to have much; but, I think, he might as well give me a little, as give all to the gardener.

Pray make my compliments to Queeney and Burney. I am, &c.

XLV. — To Mrs. Thrale

June 10, 1780

Dear Madam,—You have, ere now, heard and read enough to convince you, that we have had something to suffer, and something to fear, and, therefore, I think it necessary to quiet the solicitude which you undoubtedly feel, by telling you that our calamities and terrours are now at an end. The soldiers are stationed so as to be every where within call; there is no longer any body of rioters, and the individuals are hunted to their holes, and led to

prison; the streets are safe and quiet: lord George was last night sent to the Tower. Mr. John Wilkes was, this day, with a party of soldiers, in my neighbourhood, to seize the publisher of a seditious paper. Every body walks, and eats, and sleeps in security. But the history of the last week would fill you with amazement: it is without any modern example.

Several chapels have been destroyed, and several inoffensive papists have been plundered, but the high sport was to burn the gaols. This was a good rabble trick. The debtors and the criminals were all set at liberty; but, of the criminals, as has always happened, many are already retaken, and two pirates have surrendered themselves, and it is expected that they will be pardoned.

Government now acts again with its proper force; and we are all again under the protection of the king and the law. I thought that it would be agreeable to you and my master, to have my testimony to the publick security; and that you would sleep more quietly, when I told you, that you are safe. I am, dearest lady, your, &c.

XLVI. — To Mrs. Thrale

London, April 5, 1781

Dearest Madam,—Of your injunctions, to pray for you, and write to you, I hope to leave neither unobserved; and I hope to find you willing, in a short time, to alleviate your trouble by some other exercise of the mind. I am not without my part of the calamity. No death, since that of my wife, has

ever oppressed me like this. But let us remember, that we are in the hands of him who knows when to give and when to take away; who will look upon us, with mercy, through all our variations of existence, and who invites us to call on him in the day of trouble. Call upon him in this great revolution of life, and call with confidence. You will then find comfort for the past, and support for the future. He that has given you happiness in marriage, to a degree of which, without personal knowledge, I should have thought the description fabulous, can give you another mode of happiness as a mother, and, at last, the happiness of losing all temporal cares, in the thoughts of an eternity in heaven.

I do not exhort you to reason yourself into tranquillity. We must first pray, and then labour; first implore the blessing of God, and use those means which he puts into our hands. Cultivated ground has few weeds; a mind, occupied by lawful business, has little room for useless regret.

We read the will to-day; but I will not fill my first letter with any other account, than that, with all my zeal for your advantage, I am satisfied; and, that the other executors, more used to consider property than I, commended it for wisdom and equity. Yet, why should I not tell you, that you have five hundred pounds for your immediate expenses, and two thousand pounds a year, with both the houses, and all the goods.

Let us pray for one another, that the time, whether long or short, that shall yet be granted

us, may be well spent; and, that, when this life, which, at the longest, is very short, shall come to an end, a better may begin, which shall never end. I am, dearest madam, your, &c.

XLVII.—To Mrs. Thrale

April 7, 1781

Dear Madam,—I hope you begin to find your mind grow clearer. My part of the loss hangs upon me. I have lost a friend of boundless kindness, at an age when it is very unlikely that I should find another.

If you think change of place likely to relieve you, there is no reason why you should not go to Bath; the distances are unequal, but with regard to practice and business they are the same. It is a day's journey from either place; and the post is more expeditious and certain to Bath. Consult only your own inclination, for there is really no other principle of choice. God direct and bless you.

Mr. C——— has offered Mr. P——— money, but it was not wanted. I hope we shall all do all we can to make you less unhappy, and you must do all you can for yourself. What we, or what you can do, will, for a time, be but little; yet, certainly, that calamity which may be considered as doomed to fall inevitably on half mankind, is not finally without alleviation.

It is something for me, that, as I have not the decrepitude, I have not the callousness of old age. I hope, in time, to be less affected. I am, &c.

XLVIII.—To Mrs. Thrale

London, April 9, 1781

Dear Madam,—That you are gradually recovering your tranquillity is the effect to be humbly expected from trust in God. Do not represent life as darker than it is. Your loss has been very great, but you retain more than almost any other can hope to possess. You are high in the opinion of mankind; you have children, from whom much pleasure may be expected; and that you will find many friends you have no reason to doubt. Of my friendship, be it worth more or less, I hope you think yourself certain, without much art or care. It will not be easy for me to repay the benefits that I have received; but I hope to be always ready at your call. Our sorrow has different effects; you are withdrawn into solitude, and I am driven into company. I am afraid of thinking what I have lost. I never had such a friend before. Let me have your prayers and those of my dear Queeney.

The prudence and resolution of your design to return so soon to your business and your duty, deserves great praise; I shall communicate it, on Wednesday, to the other executors. Be pleased to let me know, whether you would have me come to Streatham to receive you, or stay here till the next day. I am, &c.

XLIX.—To the Same

Bolt Court, Fleet street, June 19, 1783

Dear Madam,—I am sitting down, in no cheerful solitude, to write a narrative, which would once have affected you with tenderness and sorrow, but which you will, perhaps, pass over now with a careless glance of frigid indifference. For this diminution of regard, however, I know not whether I ought to blame you, who may have reasons which I cannot know; and I do not blame myself, who have, for a great part of human life, done you what good I could, and have never done you evil.

I have been disordered in the usual way, and had been relieved, by the usual methods, by opium and catharticks, but had rather lessened my dose of opium.

On Monday, the 16th, I sat for my picture, and walked a considerable way, with little inconvenience. In the afternoon and evening, I felt myself light and easy, and began to plan schemes of life. Thus I went to bed, and, in a short time, waked and sat up, as has been long my custom, when I felt a confusion and indistinctness in my head, which lasted, I suppose, about half a minute; I was alarmed, and prayed God, that, however he might afflict my body, he would spare my understanding. This prayer, that I might try the integrity of my faculties, I made in Latin verse. The lines were not very good, but I knew them not to be very good: I made them easily, and concluded myself to be unimpaired in my faculties.

Soon after, I perceived that I had suffered a paralytick stroke, and that my speech was taken from me. I had no pain, and so little dejection, in this dreadful state, that I wondered at my own apathy, and considered that, perhaps, death itself, when it should come, would excite less horrour than seems now to attend it.

In order to rouse the vocal organs, I took two drams. Wine has been celebrated for the production of eloquence. I put myself into violent motion, and, I think, repeated it; but all was vain. I then went to bed, and, strange as it may seem, I think, slept. When I saw light, it was time to contrive what I should do. Though God stopped my speech, he left me my hand: I enjoyed a mercy, which was not granted to my dear friend Lawrence, who now, perhaps, overlooks me, as I am writing, and rejoices that I have what he wanted. My first note was, necessarily, to my servant, who came in talking, and could not immediately comprehend, why he should read what I put into his hands.

I then wrote a card to Mr. Allen, that I might have a discreet friend at hand, to act as occasion should require. In penning this note, I had some difficulty; my hand, I knew not how nor why, made wrong letters. I then wrote to Dr. Taylor, to come to me, and bring Dr. Heberden, and I sent to Dr. Brocklesby, who is my neighbour. My physicians are very friendly and very disinterested, and give me great hopes, but you may imagine my situation. I have so far recovered my vocal powers, as to

repeat the Lord's prayer, with no very imperfect articulation. My memory, I hope, yet remains as it was; but such an attack produces solicitude for the safety of every faculty.

How this will be received by you, I know not. I hope you will sympathize with me; but, perhaps,

> "My mistress, gracious, mild, and good,
> Cries: Is he dumb? 'Tis time he shou'd."

But can this be possible? I hope it cannot. I hope that what, when I could speak, I spoke of you, and to you, will be, in a sober and serious hour, remembered by you; and, surely, it cannot be remembered but with some degree of kindness. I have loved you with virtuous affection; I have honoured you with sincere esteem. Let not all our endearments be forgotten, but let me have, in this great distress, your pity and your prayers. You see, I yet turn to you with my complaints, as a settled and unalienable friend; do not, do not drive me from you, for I have not deserved either neglect or hatred.

To the girls, who do not write often, for Susy has written only once, and Miss Thrale owes me a letter, I earnestly recommend, as their guardian and friend, that they remember their creator in the days of their youth.

I suppose, you may wish to know, how my disease is treated by the physicians. They put a blister upon my back, and two from my ear to my throat, one on a side. The blister on the back has done little, and those on the throat have not risen. I bullied and bounced, (it sticks to our last sand,) and com-

pelled the apothecary to make his salve according to the Edinburgh dispensatory, that it might adhere better. I have two on now of my own prescription. They, likewise, give me salt of hartshorn, which I take with no great confidence, but I am satisfied that what can be done, is done for me.

O God! give me comfort and confidence in thee; forgive my sins; and, if it be thy good pleasure, relieve my diseases, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

I am almost ashamed of this querulous letter; but now it is written, let it go. I am, &c.

L.—To Mrs. Thrale

Dear Madam,—Among those that have inquired after me, sir Philip is one; and Dr. Burney was one of those who came to see me. I have had no reason to complain of indifference or neglect. Dick Burney is come home five inches taller.

Yesterday, in the evening, I went to church, and have been to-day to see the great burning-glass, which does more than was ever done before, by the transmission of the rays, but is not equal in power to those which reflect them. It wastes a diamond placed in the focus, but causes no diminution of pure gold. Of the rubies, exposed to its action, one was made more vivid, the other paler. To see the glass, I climbed up stairs to the garret, and then up a ladder to the leads, and talked to the artist rather too long; for my voice, though clear and distinct for a little while, soon tires and falters. The organs of speech are yet very feeble, but will, I hope, be, by

the mercy of God, finally restored: at present, like any other weak limb, they can endure but little labour at once. Would you not have been very sorry for me, when I could scarcely speak?

Fresh cantharides were this morning applied to my head, and are to be continued some time longer. If they play me no treacherous tricks, they give me very little pain.

Let me have your kindness and your prayers; and think on me, as on a man, who, for a very great portion of your life, has done you all the good he could, and desires still to be considered, madam, your, &c.

LI.—To Mrs. Thrale

London, July 1, 1783

Dearest Madam,—This morning I took the air, by a ride to Hampstead, and this afternoon I dined with the club. But fresh cantharides were this day applied to my head.

Mr. Cator called on me to-day, and told me, that he had invited you back to Streatham. I showed the unfitness of your return thither, till the neighbourhood should have lost its habits of depredation, and he seemed to be satisfied. He invited me, very kindly and cordially, to try the air of Beckenham; and pleased me very much by his affectionate attention to Miss Vesy. There is much good in his character, and much usefulness in his knowledge.

Queeney seems now to have forgotten me. Of the different appearance of the hills and valleys an account may, perhaps, be given, without the sup-

position of any prodigy. If she had been out, and the evening was breezy, the exhalations would rise from the low grounds very copiously; and the wind that swept and cleared the hills, would only, by its cold, condense the vapours of the sheltered valleys.

Murphy is just gone from me; he visits me very kindly, and I have no unkindness to complain of.

I am sorry that sir Philip's request was not treated with more respect, nor can I imagine what has put them so much out of humour: I hope their business is prosperous.

I hope that I recover by degrees, but my nights are restless; and you will suppose the nervous system to be somewhat enfeebled. I am, madam, your, &c.

LII.—To Mrs. Thrale

London, October 9, 1783

Two nights ago, Mr. Burke sat with me a long time; he seems much pleased with his journey. We had both seen Stonehenge this summer, for the first time. I told him that the view had enabled me to confute two opinions which have been advanced about it. One, that the materials are not natural stones, but an artificial composition, hardened by time. This notion is as old as Camden's time; and has this strong argument to support it, that stone of that species is nowhere to be found. The other opinion, advanced by Dr. Charlton, is, that it was erected by the Danes.

Mr. Bowles made me observe, that the transverse stones were fixed on the perpendicular supporters

by a knob, formed on the top of the upright stone, which entered into a hollow, cut in the crossing stone. This is a proof, that the enormous edifice was raised by a people who had not yet the knowledge of mortar; which cannot be supposed of the Danes, who came hither in ships, and were not ignorant, certainly, of the arts of life. This proves, likewise, the stones not to be factitious; for they that could mould such durable masses, could do much more than make mortar, and could have continued the transverse from the upright part with the same paste.

You have, doubtless, seen Stonehenge; and if you have not, I should think it a hard task to make an adequate description.

It is, in my opinion, to be referred to the earliest habitation of the island, as a druidical monument of, at least, two thousand years; probably the most ancient work of man, upon the island. Salisbury cathedral, and its neighbour Stonehenge, are two eminent monuments of art and rudeness, and may show the first essay, and the last perfection in architecture.

I have not yet settled my thoughts about the generation of light air, which I, indeed, once saw produced, but I was at the height of my great complaint. I have made inquiry, and shall soon be able to tell you how to fill a balloon. I am, madam, your, &c.

LIII. — To Mrs. Thrale

London, Dec. 27, 1783

Dear Madam, — The wearisome solitude of the long evenings did, indeed, suggest to me the convenience of a club in my neighbourhood, but I have been hindered from attending it by want of breath. If I can complete the scheme, you shall have the names and the regulations.

The time of the year, for I hope the fault is rather in the weather than in me, has been very hard upon me. The muscles of my breast are much convulsed. Dr. Heberden recommends opiates, of which I have such horrour, that I do not think of them but *in extremis*. I was, however, driven to them, last night, for refuge, and, having taken the usual quantity, durst not go to bed, for fear of that uneasiness to which a supine posture exposes me, but rested all night in a chair, with much relief, and have been, to-day, more warm, active, and cheerful.

You have more than once wondered at my complaint of solitude, when you hear that I am crowded with visits. "Inopem me copia fecit." Visiters are no proper companions in the chamber of sickness. They come, when I could sleep or read, they stay till I am weary, they force me to attend, when my mind calls for relaxation, and to speak, when my powers will hardly actuate my tongue. The amusements and consolations of languor and depression are conferred by familiar and domestick companions, which can be visited or called at will, and can, oc-

casionally, be quitted or dismissed, who do not obstruct accommodation by ceremony, or destroy indolence by awakening effort.

Such society I had with Levet and Williams; such I had where — I am never likely to have it more.

I wish, dear lady, to you and my dear girls, many a cheerful and pious Christmas. I am, your, &c.

LIV.—To Mrs. Piozzi

London, July 8, 1784

Dear Madam,—What you have done, however I may lament it, I have no pretence to resent, as it has not been injurious to me; I, therefore, breathe out one sigh more of tenderness, perhaps useless, but at least sincere.

I wish that God may grant you every blessing, that you may be happy in this world, for its short continuance, and eternally happy in a better state; and whatever I can contribute to your happiness, I am very ready to repay, for that kindness which soothed twenty years of a life radically wretched.

Do not think slightly of the advice which I now presume to offer. Prevail upon Mr. Piozzi to settle in England: you may live here with more dignity than in Italy, and with more security; your rank will be higher, and your fortune more under your own eye. I desire not to detail all my reasons; but every argument of prudence and interest is for England, and only some phantoms of imagination seduce you to Italy.

I am afraid, however, that my counsel is vain, yet I have eased my heart by giving it.

When queen Mary took the resolution of sheltering herself in England, the archbishop of St. Andrew's, attempting to dissuade her, attended on her journey; and when they came to the irremeable stream, that separated the two kingdoms, walked by her side into the water, in the middle of which he seized her bridle, and with earnestness, proportioned to her danger and his own affection, pressed her to return. The queen went forward.—If the parallel reaches thus far, may it go no farther.—The tears stand in my eyes.

I am going into Derbyshire, and hope to be followed by your good wishes, for I am, with great affection, your, &c.

COWLEY

COWLEY

THE life of Cowley, notwithstanding the penury of English biography, has been written by Dr. Sprat, an author whose pregnancy of imagination and elegance of language have deservedly set him high in the ranks of literature; but his zeal of friendship, or ambition of eloquence, has produced a funeral oration rather than a history: he has given the character, not the life, of Cowley; for he writes with so little detail, that scarcely any thing is distinctly known, but all is shown confused and enlarged through the mist of panegyrick.

Abraham Cowley was born in the year one thousand six hundred and eighteen. His father was a grocer, whose condition Dr. Sprat conceals under the general appellation of a citizen; and, what would probably not have been less carefully suppressed, the omission of his name in the register of St. Dunstan's parish gives reason to suspect that his father was a sectary. Whoever he was, he died before the birth of his son, and, consequently, left him to the care of his mother; whom Wood represents as struggling earnestly to procure him a literary education, and who, as she lived to the age of eighty, had her solicitude rewarded, by seeing her son eminent, and, I hope, by seeing him fortunate, and partaking his prosperity. We know, at least, from Sprat's account, that he always acknowledged her care, and justly paid the dues of filial gratitude.

In the window of his mother's apartment lay Spenser's Fairy Queen; in which he very early took

delight to read, till, by feeling the charms of verse, he became, as he relates, irrecoverably a poet. Such are the accidents which, sometimes remembered, and, perhaps, sometimes forgotten, produce that particular designation of mind, and propensity for some certain science or employment, which is commonly called genius. The true genius is a mind of large general powers, accidentally determined to some particular direction. Sir Joshua Reynolds, the great painter of the present age, had the first fondness for his art excited by the perusal of Richardson's treatise.

By his mother's solicitation he was admitted into Westminster school, where he was soon distinguished. He was wont, says Sprat, to relate, "that he had this defect in his memory at that time, that his teachers never could bring it to retain the ordinary rules of grammar."

This is an instance of the natural desire of man to propagate a wonder. It is, surely, very difficult to tell any thing as it was heard, when Sprat could not refrain from amplifying a commodious incident, though the book to which he prefixed his narrative, contained its confutation. A memory admitting some things and rejecting others, an intellectual digestion that concocted the pulp of learning, but refused the husks, had the appearance of an instinctive elegance, of a particular provision made by nature for literary politeness. But, in the author's own honest relation, the marvel vanishes: he was, he says, such "an enemy to all constraint, that his

master never could prevail on him to learn the rules without book.'' He does not tell, that he could not learn the rules; but that, being able to perform his exercises without them, and being an ''enemy to constraint,'' he spared himself the labour.

Among the English poets, Cowley, Milton, and Pope, might be said ''to lisp in numbers;'' and have given such early proofs, not only of powers of language, but of comprehension of things, as, to more tardy minds, seems scarcely credible. But of the learned puerilities of Cowley there is no doubt, since a volume of his poems was not only written, but printed, in his thirteenth year[j]; containing, with other poetical compositions, the Tragical History of Pyramus and Thisbe, written when he was ten years old; and Constantia and Philetus, written two years after.

While he was yet at school, he produced a comedy, called, Love's Riddle, though it was not published, till he had been some time at Cambridge. This comedy is of the pastoral kind, which requires no acquaintance with the living world, and, therefore, the time at which it was composed adds little to the wonders of Cowley's minority.

In 1636, he was removed to Cambridge[k], where he continued his studies with great intenseness; for he is said to have written, while he was yet a young

[j] This volume was not published before 1633, when Cowley was fifteen years old. Dr. Johnson, as well as former biographers, seems to have been misled by the portrait of Cowley being, by mistake, marked with the age of thirteen years. R.

[k] He was a candidate this year at Westminster school for election to Trinity college, but proved unsuccessful.

student, the greater part of his Davideis; a work of which the materials could not have been collected without the study of many years, but by a mind of the greatest vigour and activity.

Two years after his settlement at Cambridge he published Love's Riddle, with a poetical dedication to sir Kenelm Digby, of whose acquaintance all his contemporaries seem to have been ambitious; and Naufragium Joculare, a comedy, written in Latin, but without due attention to the ancient models; for it is not loose verse, but mere prose. It was printed with a dedication in verse, to Dr. Comber, master of the college; but, having neither the facility of a popular, nor the accuracy of a learned work, it seems to be now universally neglected.

At the beginning of the civil war, as the prince passed through Cambridge, in his way to York, he was entertained with a representation of the Guardian, a comedy, which, Cowley says, was neither written nor acted, but rough-drawn by him, and repeated by the scholars. That this comedy was printed during his absence from his country, he appears to have considered as injurious to his reputation; though, during the suppression of the theatres, it was sometimes privately acted with sufficient approbation.

In 1643, being now master of arts, he was, by the prevalence of the parliament, ejected from Cambridge, and sheltered himself at St. John's college, in Oxford; where, as is said by Wood, he published a satire, called the Puritan and Papist, which was

only inserted in the last collection of his works[1]; and so distinguished himself by the warmth of his loyalty and the elegance of his conversation, that he gained the kindness and confidence of those who attended the king, and, amongst others, of lord Falkland, whose notice cast a lustre on all to whom it was extended.

About the time when Oxford was surrendered to the parliament, he followed the queen to Paris, where he became secretary to the lord Jermyn, afterwards earl of St. Alban's, and was employed in such correspondence as the royal cause required, and particularly in ciphering and deciphering the letters that passed between the king and queen; an employment of the highest confidence and honour. So wide was his province of intelligence, that, for several years, it filled all his days and two or three nights in the week.

In the year 1647, his Mistress was published; for he imagined, as he declared in his preface to a subsequent edition, that "poets are scarcely thought freemen of their company without paying some duties, or obliging themselves to be true to love."

This obligation to amorous ditties owes, I believe, its original to the fame of Petrarch, who, in an age rude and uncultivated, by his tuneful homage to his Laura, refined the manners of the lettered world, and filled Europe with love and poetry. But the

[1] In the first edition of this life, Dr. Johnson wrote, "which was never inserted in any collection of his works;" but he altered the expression when the Lives were collected into volumes. The satire was added to Cowley's works by the particular direction of Dr. Johnson. N.

basis of all excellence is truth: he that professes love ought to feel its power. Petrarch was a real lover, and Laura doubtless deserved his tenderness. Of Cowley, we are told by Barnes, who had means enough of information, that, whatever he may talk of his own inflammability, and the variety of characters by which his heart was divided, he, in reality, was in love but once, and then never had resolution to tell his passion.

This consideration cannot but abate, in some measure, the reader's esteem for the work and the author. To love excellence is natural; it is natural, likewise, for the lover to solicit reciprocal regard by an elaborate display of his own qualifications. The desire of pleasing has, in different men, produced actions of heroism, and effusions of wit; but it seems as reasonable to appear the champion as the poet of an "airy nothing," and to quarrel as to write for what Cowley might have learned from his master Pindar, to call "the dream of a shadow."

It is surely not difficult, in the solitude of a college, or in the bustle of the world, to find useful studies and serious employment. No man needs to be so burdened with life, as to squander it in voluntary dreams of fictitious occurrences. The man that sits down to suppose himself charged with treason or peculation, and heats his mind to an elaborate purgation of his character from crimes which he was never within the possibility of committing, differs only by the infrequency of his folly from him who praises beauty which he never saw; complains of

jealousy which he never felt; supposes himself sometimes invited, and sometimes forsaken; fatigues his fancy, and ransacks his memory, for images which may exhibit the gaiety of hope, or the gloominess of despair; and dresses his imaginary Chloris or Phyllis, sometimes in flowers fading as her beauty, and sometimes in gems lasting as her virtues.

At Paris, as secretary to lord Jermyn, he was engaged in transacting things of real importance with real men and real women, and, at that time, did not much employ his thoughts upon phantoms of gallantry. Some of his letters to Mr. Bennet, afterwards earl of Arlington, from April to December, in 1650, are preserved in Miscellanea Aulica, a collection of papers, published by Brown. These letters, being written, like those of other men, whose minds are more on things than words, contribute no otherwise to his reputation, than as they show him to have been above the affectation of unseasonable elegance, and to have known, that the business of a statesman can be little forwarded by flowers of rhetorick.

One passage, however, seems not unworthy of some notice. Speaking of the Scotch treaty, then in agitation:

"The Scotch treaty," says he, "is the only thing now in which we are vitally concerned; I am one of the last hopers, and yet cannot now abstain from believing that an agreement will be made; all people upon the place incline to that of union. The Scotch will moderate something of the rigour of their demands; the mutual necessity of an accord is

visible, the king is persuaded of it. And, to tell you the truth, which I take to be an argument above all the rest, Virgil has told the same thing to that purpose."

This expression from a secretary of the present time would be considered as merely ludicrous, or, at most, as an ostentatious display of scholarship; but the manners of that time were so tinged with superstition, that I cannot but suspect Cowley of having consulted, on this great occasion, the Virgilian lots[m], and to have given some credit to the answer of his oracle.

[m] Consulting the Virgilian lots, Sortes Virgilianæ, is a method of divination by the opening of Virgil, and applying to the circumstances of the peruser the first passage in either of the two pages that he accidentally fixes his eye on. It is said, that king Charles the first, and lord Falkland, being in the Bodleian library, made this experiment of their future fortunes, and met with passages equally omnious to each.

That of the king was the following:

At bello audacis populi vexatus et armis,
Finibus extorris, complexu avulsus Iuli,
Auxilium imploret, videatque indigna suorum
Funera, nec, cum se sub leges pacis iniquæ
Tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur:
Sed cadat ante diem, mediaque inhumatus arena. Æneid. iv. 615.

Yet let a race untam'd, and haughty foes,
His peaceful entrance with dire arms oppose,
Oppress'd with numbers in th' unequal field,
His men discourag'd and himself expell'd:
Let him for succour sue from place to place,
Torn from his subjects and his son's embrace.
First let him see his friends in battle slain,
And their untimely fate lament in vain:
And when, at length, the cruel war shall cease,
On hard conditions may he buy his peace;
Nor let him then enjoy supreme command,
But fall untimely by some hostile hand,
And lie unburied on the barren sand. DRYDEN.

Some years afterwards, "business," says Sprat, "passed of course into other hands;" and Cowley, being no longer useful at Paris, was, in 1656, sent back into England, that, "under pretence of privacy and retirement, he might take occasion of giving notice of the posture of things in this nation."

Soon after his return to London, he was seized by some messengers of the usurping powers, who were sent out in quest of another man; and, being examined, was put into confinement, from which he was not dismissed without the security of a thousand pounds, given by Dr. Scarborough.

This year he published his poems, with a preface, in which he seems to have inserted something sup-

Lord Falkland's:

Non hæc, O Palla, dederas promissa parenti,
Cautius ut sævo velles te credere Marti.
Haud ignarus eram, quantum nova gloria in armis,
Et prædulce decus primo certamine posset.
Primitiæ juvenis miseræ, bellique propinqui
Dura rudimenta, et nulli exaudita deorum,
Vota precesque meæ! Æneid. xi. 152.

O Pallas, thou hast fail'd thy plighted word,
To fight with caution, not to tempt the sword;
I warn'd thee, but in vain, for well I knew
What perils youthful ardour would pursue,
That boiling blood would carry thee too far,
Young as thou wert to dangers, raw to war.
O curst essay of arms, disastrous doom,
Prelude of bloody fields and fights to come!
Hard elements of unauspicious war,
Vain vows to heaven, and unavailing care! Dryden.

Hoffman, in his Lexicon, gives a very satisfactory account of this practice of seeking fates in books: and says, that it was used by the pagans, the jewish rabbins, and even the early christians; the latter taking the new Testament for their oracle.

pressed in subsequent editions, which was interpreted to denote some relaxation of his loyalty. In this preface he declares, that "his desire had been for some days past, and did still very vehemently continue, to retire himself to some of the American plantations, and to forsake this world for ever."

From the obloquy which the appearance of submission to the usurpers brought upon him, his biographer has been very diligent to clear him, and, indeed, it does not seem to have lessened his reputation. His wish for retirement we can easily believe to be undissembled; a man harassed in one kingdom, and persecuted in another, who, after a course of business that employed all his days, and half his nights, in ciphering and deciphering, comes to his own country, and steps into a prison, will be willing enough to retire to some place of quiet and of safety. Yet let neither our reverence for a genius, nor our pity for a sufferer, dispose us to forget, that, if his activity was virtue, his retreat was cowardice[n].

He then took upon himself the character of physician, still, according to Sprat, with intention "to dissemble the main design of his coming over;" and, as Mr. Wood relates, "complying with the men

n Johnson has exhibited here as little feeling for the neglected servant of the thankless house of Stewart, as he displayed in the cold contempt of his sixth Rambler. An unmeaning compliment from a worthless king was Cowley's only recompense for years of faithful and painful services. A heart loyal and affectionate, like his, may well be excused the utterance of its pains, when wounded by those for whom it would so cheerfully have poured forth its blood. We repeat, that Cowley's misfortune was his devotion to a family, who invariably forgot, in their prosperity, those who had defended them in the day of adversity. Ed.

then in power, which was much taken notice of by the royal party, he obtained an order to be created doctor of physick; which being done to his mind, whereby he gained the ill will of some of his friends, he went into France again, having made a copy of verses on Oliver's death."

This is no favourable representation, yet even in this not much wrong can be discovered. How far he complied with the men in power, is to be inquired before he can be blamed. It is not said, that he told them any secrets, or assisted them by intelligence or any other act. If he only promised to be quiet, that they in whose hands he was might free him from confinement, he did what no law of society prohibits.

The man whose miscarriage in a just cause has put him in the power of his enemy may, without any violation of his integrity, regain his liberty, or preserve his life, by a promise of neutrality; for, the stipulation gives the enemy nothing which he had not before: the neutrality of a captive may be always secured by his imprisonment or death. He that is at the disposal of another may not promise to aid him in any injurious act, because no power can compel active obedience. He may engage to do nothing, but not to do ill.

There is reason to think that Cowley promised little. It does not appear that his compliance gained him confidence enough to be trusted without security, for the bond of his bail was never cancelled; nor that it made him think himself secure, for, at

that dissolution of government which followed the death of Oliver, he returned into France, where he resumed his former station, and staid till the restoration[o].

"He continued," says his biographer, "under these bonds, till the general deliverance;" it is, therefore, to be supposed, that he did not go to France, and act again for the king, without the consent of his bondsman; that he did not show his loyalty at the hazard of his friend, but by his friend's permission.

Of the verses on Oliver's death, in which Wood's narrative seems to imply something encomiastick, there has been no appearance. There is a discourse concerning his government, indeed, with verses intermixed, but such as certainly gained its author no friends among the abettors of usurpation.

A doctor of physick, however, he was made at Oxford, in December, 1657; and, in the commencement of the Royal Society, of which an account has been given by Dr. Birch, he appears busy among the experimental philosophers, with the title of Dr. Cowley.

There is no reason for supposing that he ever attempted practice: but his preparatory studies have contributed something to the honour of his country. Considering botany as necessary to a physician, he retired into Kent to gather plants; and as the predominance of a favourite study affects all subordinate operations of the intellect, botany, in the mind

[o] See Campbell's Poet's, iv. 75.

of Cowley, turned into poetry. He composed, in Latin, several books on plants, of which the first and second display the qualities of herbs, in elegiac verse; the third and fourth, the beauties of flowers, in various measures; and the fifth and sixth, the uses of trees, in heroick numbers.

At the same time were produced, from the same university, the two great poets, Cowley and Milton, of dissimilar genius, of opposite principles; but concurring in the cultivation of Latin poetry, in which the English, till their works and May's poem appeared[p], seemed unable to contest the palm with any other of the lettered nations.

If the Latin performances of Cowley and Milton be compared, (for May I hold to be superiour to both,) the advantage seems to lie on the side of Cowley. Milton is generally content to express the thoughts of the ancients in their language; Cowley, without much loss of purity or elegance, accommodates the diction of Rome to his own conceptions.

At the restoration, after all the diligence of his long service, and with consciousness not only of the merit of fidelity, but of the dignity of great abilities, he naturally expected ample preferments; and, that he might not be forgotten by his own fault, wrote a song of triumph. But this was a time

[p] By May's poem, we are here to understand a continuation of Lucan's Pharsalia, to the death of Julius Cæsar, by Thomas May, an eminent poet and historian, who flourished in the reigns of James and Charles the first, and of whom a life is given in the Biographia Britannica. The merit of Cowley's Latin poems is well examined in Censura Literaria, vol. viii. See also Warton's Preface to Milton's Juvenile Poems. Ed.

of such general hope, that great numbers were inevitably disappointed; and Cowley found his reward very tediously delayed. He had been promised, by both Charles the first and second, the mastership of the Savoy; "but he lost it," says Wood, "by certain persons, enemies to the muses."

The neglect of the court was not his only mortification; having by such alteration, as he thought proper, fitted his old comedy of the Guardian for the stage, he produced it[q], under the title of the Cutter of Coleman street[r]. It was treated on the stage with great severity, and was afterwards censured as a satire on the king's party.

Mr. Dryden, who went with Mr. Sprat to the first exhibition, related to Mr. Dennis, "that, when they told Cowley how little favour had been shown him, he received the news of his ill success, not with so much firmness as might have been expected from so great a man."

What firmness they expected, or what weakness Cowley discovered, cannot be known. He that misses his end will never be as much pleased as he that attains it, even when he can impute no part of his failure to himself; and when the end is to please the multitude, no man, perhaps, has a right, in things admitting of gradation and comparison, to

[q] 1663.

[r] Here is an error in the designation of this comedy, which our author copied from the title page of the latter editions of Cowley's works: the title of the play itself is without the article, "Cutter of Coleman street," and that, because a merry sharking fellow about the town, named Cutter, is a principal character in it.

throw the whole blame upon his judges, and totally to exclude diffidence and shame by a haughty consciousness of his own excellence.

For the rejection of this play, it is difficult now to find the reason: it certainly has, in a very great degree, the power of fixing attention and exciting merriment. From the charge of disaffection he exculpates himself, in his preface, by observing, how unlikely it is, that, having followed the royal family through all their distresses, "he should choose the time of their restoration to begin a quarrel with them." It appears, however, from the Theatrical Register of Downes, the prompter, to have been popularly considered as a satire on the royalists.

That he might shorten this tedious suspense, he published his pretensions and his discontent, in an ode called the Complaint; in which he styles himself the *melancholy* Cowley. This met with the usual fortune of complaints, and seems to have excited more contempt than pity.

These unlucky incidents are brought, maliciously enough, together in some stanzas, written about that time on the choice of a laureate; a mode of satire, by which, since it was first introduced by Suckling, perhaps, every generation of poets has been teased.

> Savoy-missing Cowley came into the court,
> Making apologies for his bad play;
> Every one gave him so good a report,
> That Apollo gave heed to all he could say:
> Nor would he have had, 'tis thought, a rebuke,
> Unless he had done some notable folly;
> Writ verses unjustly in praise of Sam Tuke,
> Or printed his pitiful Melancholy.

His vehement desire of retirement now came again upon him. "Not finding," says the morose Wood, "that preferment conferred upon him which he expected, while others for their money carried away most places, he retired discontented into Surrey."

"He was now," says the courtly Sprat, "weary of the vexations and formalities of an active condition. He had been perplexed with a long compliance to foreign manners. He was satiated with the arts of a court; which sort of life, though his virtue made it innocent to him, yet nothing could make it quiet. Those were the reasons that moved him to follow the violent inclination of his own mind, which, in the greatest throng of his former business, had still called upon him, and represented to him the true delights of solitary studies, of temperate pleasures, and a moderate revenue below the malice and flatteries of fortune."

So differently are things seen! and so differently are they shown! But actions are visible, though motives are secret. Cowley certainly retired; first to Barn-elms, and afterwards to Chertsey, in Surrey. He seems, however, to have lost part of his dread of the "hum of men[s]." He thought himself now safe enough from intrusion, without the defence of mountains and oceans; and, instead of seeking shelter in America, wisely went only so far from the bustle of life as that he might easily find his way back, when solitude should grow tedious. His retreat

[s] L'Allegro of Milton. Dr. J.

was, at first, but slenderly accommodated; yet he soon obtained, by the interest of the earl of St. Alban's and the duke of Buckingham, such a lease of the queen's lands, as afforded him an ample income[t].

By the lovers of virtue and of wit it will be solicitously asked, if he now was happy. Let them peruse one of his letters, accidentally preserved by Peck, which I recommend to the consideration of all that may, hereafter, pant for solitude.

"TO DR. THOMAS SPRAT

"Chertsey, May 21, 1665

"The first night that I came hither I caught so great a cold, with a defluxion of rheum, as made me keep my chamber ten days. And, two after, had such a bruise on my ribs with a fall, that I am yet unable to move or turn myself in my bed. This is my personal fortune here to begin with. And, besides, I can get no money from my tenants, and have my meadows eaten up every night by cattle put in by my neighbours. What this signifies, or may come to in time, God knows; if it be ominous, it can end in nothing less than hanging. Another misfortune has been, and stranger than all the rest, that you have broke your word with me, and failed to come, even though you told Mr. Bois that you would. This is what they call 'Monstri simile.' I do hope to recover my late hurt so farre within five or six days, (though it be uncertain yet whether I shall ever recover it,) as to walk about again. And then, me-

[t] About three hundred pounds per annum. See Campbell's Poets, iv.

thinks, you and I and 'the dean' might be very merry upon St. Ann's hill. You might very conveniently come hither the way of Hampton Town, lying there one night. I write this in pain, and can say no more: 'Verbum sapienti.'"

He did not long enjoy the pleasure, or suffer the uneasiness, of solitude; for he died at the Porch-house[u] in Chertsey, in 1667, in the forty-ninth year of his age.

He was buried, with great pomp, near Chaucer and Spenser; and king Charles pronounced, "that Mr. Cowley had not left behind him a better man in England." He is represented, by Dr. Sprat, as the most amiable of mankind; and this posthumous praise may safely be credited, as it has never been contradicted by envy or by faction.

Such are the remarks and memorials which I have been able to add to the narrative of Dr. Sprat; who, writing when the feuds of the civil war were yet recent, and the minds of either party were easily irritated, was obliged to pass over many transactions in general expressions, and to leave curiosity often unsatisfied. What he did not tell, cannot, however, now be known; I must, therefore, recommend the perusal of his work, to which my narration can be considered only as a slender supplement.

Cowley, like other poets who have written with narrow views, and, instead of tracing intellectual

[u] Now in the possession of Mr. Clark, alderman of London. Dr. J. — Mr. Clark was, in 1798, elected to the important office of chamberlain of London; and has every year since been unanimously reelected. N.

pleasures in the minds of men, paid their court to temporary prejudices, has been at one time too much praised, and too much neglected at another.

Wit, like all other things, subject by their nature to the choice of man, has its changes and fashions, and, at different times, takes different forms. About the beginning of the seventeenth century, appeared a race of writers, that may be termed the metaphysical poets; of whom in a criticism on the works of Cowley, it is not improper to give some account.

The metaphysical poets were men of learning, and, to show their learning was their whole endeavour; but, unluckily resolving to show it in rhyme, instead of writing poetry; they only wrote verses, and, very often, such verses as stood the trial of the finger better than of the ear; for the modulation was so imperfect, that they were only found to be verses by counting the syllables.

If the father of criticism has rightly denominated poetry, τέχνη μιμητικὴ, an imitative art, these writers will, without great wrong, lose their right to the name of poets; for they cannot be said to have imitated any thing; they neither copied nature nor life; neither painted the forms of matter, nor represented the operations of intellect.

Those, however, who deny them to be poets, allow them to be wits. Dryden confesses of himself and his contemporaries, that they fall below Donne in wit; but maintains, that they surpass him in poetry.

If wit be well described by Pope, as being "that which has been often thought, but was never before

so well expressed,'' they certainly never attained, nor ever sought it; for they endeavoured to be singular in their thoughts, and were careless of their diction. But Pope's account of wit is undoubtedly erroneous: he depresses it below its natural dignity, and reduces it from strength of thought to happiness of language.

If, by a more noble and more adequate conception, that be considered as wit which is, at once, natural and new, that which, though not obvious, is, upon its first production, acknowledged to be just; if it be that, which he that never found it, wonders how he missed; to wit of this kind the metaphysical poets have seldom risen. Their thoughts are often new, but seldom natural; they are not obvious, but neither are they just; and the reader, far from wondering that he missed them, wonders more frequently by what perverseness of industry they were ever found.

But wit, abstracted from its effects upon the hearer, may be more rigorously and philosophically considered as a kind of ''discordia concors;'' a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike. Of wit, thus defined, they have more than enough. The most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together; nature and art are ransacked for illustrations, comparisons, and allusions; their learning instructs, and their subtilty surprises; but the reader commonly thinks his improvement dearly bought, and, though he sometimes admires, is seldom pleased.

From this account of their compositions it will be readily inferred, that they were not successful in representing or moving the affections. As they were wholly employed on something unexpected and surprising, they had no regard to that uniformity of sentiment which enables us to conceive and to excite the pains and the pleasure of other minds: they never inquired what, on any occasion, they should have said or done; but wrote rather as beholders, than partakers of human nature; as beings looking upon good and evil, impassive and at leisure; as epicurean deities, making remarks on the actions of men, and the vicissitudes of life, without interest and without emotion. Their courtship was void of fondness, and their lamentation of sorrow. Their wish was only to say what they hoped had never been said before.

Nor was the sublime more within their reach than the pathetick; for they never attempted that comprehension and expanse of thought which, at once, fills the whole mind, and of which, the first effect is sudden astonishment, and the second, rational admiration. Sublimity is produced by aggregation, and littleness by dispersion. Great thoughts are always general, and consist in positions not limited by exceptions, and in descriptions not descending to minuteness. It is with great propriety that subtilty, which, in its original import, means exility of particles, is taken, in its metaphorical meaning, for nicety of distinction. Those writers who lay on the watch for novelty could have little hope of greatness;

for great things cannot have escaped former observation. Their attempts were always analytick; they broke every image into fragments; and could no more represent, by their slender conceits, and laboured particularities, the prospects of nature, or the scenes of life, than he who dissects a sunbeam with a prism can exhibit the wide effulgence of a summer noon.

What they wanted, however, of the sublime, they endeavoured to supply by hyperbole; their amplification had no limits; they left not only reason but fancy behind them; and produced combinations of confused magnifience, that not only could not be credited, but could not be imagined.

Yet great labour, directed by great abilities, is never wholly lost; if they frequently threw away their wit upon false conceits, they, likewise, sometimes struck out unexpected truth; if their conceits were far-fetched, they were often worth the carriage. To write on their plan it was, at least, necessary to read and think. No man could be born a metaphysical poet, nor assume the dignity of a writer, by descriptions copied from descriptions, by imitations borrowed from imitations, by traditional imagery, and hereditary similes, by readiness of rhyme, and volubility of syllables[v].

In perusing the works of this race of authors, the mind is exercised either by recollection or inquiry; either something already learned is to be retrieved, or something new is to be examined. If their greatness seldom elevates, their acuteness often surprises;

[v] For metaphysical poets, see Brydges' Restituta, vol. iv.

if the imagination is not always gratified, at least the powers of reflection and comparison are employed; and, in the mass of materials which ingenious absurdity has thrown together, genuine wit and useful knowledge may be sometimes found buried, perhaps, in grossness of expression, but useful to those who know their value; and such as, when they are expanded to perspicuity, and polished to elegance, may give lustre to works which have more propriety, though less copiousness of sentiment.

This kind of writing, which was, I believe, borrowed from Marino and his followers, had been recommended by the example of Donne, a man of very extensive and various knowledge; and by Jonson, whose manner resembled that of Donne more in the ruggedness of his lines than in the cast of his sentiments.

When their reputation was high, they had, undoubtedly, more imitators than time has left behind. Their immediate successours, of whom any remembrance can be said to remain, were Suckling, Waller, Denham, Cowley, Cleiveland, and Milton. Denham and Waller sought another way to fame, by improving the harmony of our numbers. Milton tried the metaphysick style only in his lines upon Hobson, the carrier. Cowley adopted it, and excelled his predecessors, having as much sentiment, and more musick. Suckling neither improved versification, nor abounded in conceits. The fashionable style remained chiefly with Cowley; Suckling could not reach it, and Milton disdained it.

Critical remarks are not easily understood without examples; and I have, therefore, collected instances of the modes of writing by which this species of poets, for poets they were called by themselves and their admirers, was eminently distinguished.

As the authors of this race were, perhaps, more desirous of being admired than understood, they sometimes drew their conceits from recesses of learning, not very much frequented by common readers of poetry. Thus Cowley, on knowledge:

> The sacred tree 'midst the fair orchard grew;
> The phœnix, truth, did on it rest,
> And built his perfum'd nest:
> That right Porphyrian tree which did true logic shew;
> Each leaf did learned notions give,
> And th' apples were demonstrative;
> So clear their colour and divine,
> The very shade they cast did other lights outshine.

On Anacreon continuing a lover in his old age:

> Love was with thy life entwin'd,
> Close as heat with fire is join'd;
> A powerful brand prescrib'd the date
> Of thine, like Meleager's fate.
> Th' antiperistasis of age
> More enflam'd thy amorous rage.

In the following verses we have an allusion to a rabbinical opinion concerning manna:

> Variety I ask not: give me one
> To live perpetually upon.
> The person love does to us fit,
> Like manna, has the taste of all in it.

Thus Donne shows his medicinal knowledge in some encomiastick verses:

> In every thing there naturally grows
> A balsamum to keep it fresh and new,

If 'twere not injur'd by extrinsique blows;
Your youth and beauty are this balm in you.
But you, of learning and religion,
And virtue and such ingredients, have made
A mithridate, whose operation
Keeps off, or cures what can be done or said.

Though the following lines of Donne, on the last night of the year, have something in them too scholastick, they are not inelegant:

This twilight of two years, not passed nor next,
Some emblem is of me, or I of this,
Who, meteor-like, of stuff and form perplext,
Whose what and where in disputation is,
If I should call me any thing, should miss.
I sum the years and me, and find me not
Debtor to th' old, nor creditor to th' new.
That cannot say, my thanks I have forgot;
Nor trust I this with hopes; and yet scarce true
This bravery is, since these times shew'd me you.

Yet more abstruse and profound is Donne's reflection upon man as a microcosm:

If men be worlds, there is in every one
Something to answer in some proportion
All the world's riches: and in good men, this
Virtue, our form's form, and our soul's soul, is.

Of thoughts so far-fetched, as to be not only unexpected, but unnatural, all their books are full.

To a lady, who wrote poesies for rings:

They, who above do various circles find,
Say, like a ring, th' equator heaven does bind.
When heaven shall be adorn'd by thee,
(Which then more heaven than 'tis will be,)
'Tis thou must write the poesy there,
For it wanteth one as yet,
Then the sun pass through 't twice a year,
The sun, which is esteem'd the god of wit. COWLEY.

The difficulties which have been raised about identity in philosophy, are, by Cowley, with still more perplexity applied to love:

Five years ago (says story) I lov'd you,
For which you call me most inconstant now;
Pardon me, madam, you mistake the man;
For I am not the same that I was then:
No flesh is now the same 'twas then in me;
And that my mind is chang'd yourself may see.
The same thoughts to retain still, and intents,
Were more inconstant far; for accidents
Must of all things most strangely inconstant prove,
If from one subject they t' another move;
My members, then, the father members were,
From whence these take their birth which now are here.
If then this body love what th' other did,
'Twere incest, which by nature is forbid.

The love of different women is, in geographical poetry, compared to travels through different countries:

Has thou not found each woman's breast
(The land where thou hast travelled)
Either by savages possest,
Or wild, and uninhabited?
What joy could'st take, or what repose,
In countries so unciviliz'd as those?
Lust, the scorching dogstar, here
Rages with immoderate heat;
Whilst pride, the rugged northern bear,
In others make the cold too great.
And where these are temperate known,
The soil's all barren sand, or rocky stone. COWLEY.

A lover, burnt up by his affection, is compared to Egypt:

The fate of Egypt I sustain,
And never feel the dew of rain
From clouds which in the head appear;
But all my too much moisture owe
To overflowings of the heart below. COWLEY.

The lover supposes his lady acquainted with the ancient laws of augury, and rites of sacrifice:

> And yet this death of mine, I fear,
> Will ominous to her appear:
> When sound in every other part,
> Her sacrifice is found without an heart.
> For the last tempest of my death
> Shall sigh out that too, with my breath.

That the chaos was harmonized, has been recited of old; but whence the different sounds arose remained for a modern to discover:

> Th' ungovern'd parts no correspondence knew;
> An artless war from thwarting motions grew;
> Till they to number and fixt rules were brought.
> Water and air he for the tenor chose;
> Earth made the base; the treble, flame arose. COWLEY.

The tears of lovers are always of great poetical account; but Donne has extended them into worlds. If the lines are not easily understood, they may be read again:

> On a round ball
> A workman, that hath copies by, can lay
> An Europe, Afric, and an Asia,
> And quickly make that, which was nothing, all.
> So doth each tear,
> Which thee doth wear,
> A globe, yea world, by that impression grow,
> Till thy tears mixt with mine do overflow
> This world, by waters sent from thee my heaven dissolved so.

On reading the following lines, the reader may, perhaps, cry out, "Confusion worse confounded:"

> Here lies a she-sun, and a he-moon here,
> She gives the best light to his sphere,
> Or each is both, and all, and so
> They unto one another nothing owe. DONNE.

Who but Donne would have thought that a good man is a telescope ?

Though God be our true glass, through which we see
All, since the being of all things is he,
Yet are the trunks, which do to us derive
Things in proportion fit, by perspective
Deeds of good men; for by their living here,
Virtues, indeed remote, seem to be near.

Who would imagine it possible, that in a very few lines so many remote ideas could be brought together ?

Since 'tis my doom, love's undershrieve,
Why this reprieve ?
Why doth my she-advowson fly
Incumbency ?
To sell thyself dost thou intend
By candle's end,
And hold the contrast thus in doubt,
Life's taper out ?]
Think but how soon the market fails,
Your sex lives faster than the males;
And if, to measure age's span,
The sober Julian were th' account of man,
Whilst you live by the fleet Gregorian. CLEIVELAND.

Of enormous and disgusting hyperboles, these may be examples:

By every wind that comes this way,
Send me, at least, a sigh or two,
Such and so many I'll repay
As shall themselves make winds to get to you. COWLEY.

In tears I'll waste these eyes,
By love so vainly fed;
So lust of old the deluge punished. COWLEY.

All arm'd in brass, the richest dress of war,
(A dismal glorious sight!) he shone afar.
The sun himself started with sudden fright,
To see his beams return so dismal bright. COWLEY.

An universal consternation:

His bloody eyes he hurls round, his sharp paws
Tear up the ground; then runs he wild about,
Lashing his angry tail, and roaring out.
Beasts creep into their dens, and tremble there;
Trees, though no wind is stirring, shake with fear;
Silence and horror fill the place around;
Echo itself dares scare repeat the sound. COWLEY.

Their fictions were often violent and unnatural.

Of his mistress bathing:

The fish around her crowded, as they do
To the false light that treacherous fishers shew,
And all with as much ease might taken be,
As she at first took me;
For ne'er did light so clear
Among the waves appear,
Though every night the sun himself set there. COWLEY.

The poetical effect of a lover's name upon glass:

My name engrav'd herein
Doth contribute my firmness to this glass;
Which, ever since that charm, hath been
As hard as that which grav'd it was. DONNE.

Their conceits were sentiments slight and trifling.

On an inconstant woman:

He enjoys the calmy sunshine now,
And no breath stirring hears;
In the clear heaven of thy brow,
No smallest cloud appears.
He sees thee gentle, fair and gay,
And trusts the faithless April of thy May. COWLEY.

Upon a paper, written with the juice of lemon, and read by the fire:

Nothing yet in thee is seen,
But when a genial heat warms thee within,
A new-born wood of various lines there grows:

Here buds an L, and there a B;
Here sprouts a V, and there a T;
And all the flourishing letters stand in rows. COWLEY.

As they sought only for novelty, they did not much inquire, whether their allusions were to things high or low, elegant or gross; whether they compared the little to the great, or the great to the little.

Physick and chirurgery for a lover:

Gently, ah gently, madam, touch
The wound, which you yourself have made;
That pain must needs be very much,
Which makes me of your hand afraid,
Cordials of pity give me now,
For I too weak for purgings grow. COWLEY.

The world and a clock:

Mahol th' inferior world's fantastic face
Thro' all the turns of matter's maze did trace;
Great nature's well-set clock in pieces took;
On all the springs and smallest wheels did look
Of life and motion, and with equal art
Made up the whole again of every part. COWLEY.

A coal-pit has not often found its poet; but, that it may not want its due honour, Cleiveland has paralleled it with the sun:

The moderate value of our guiltless ore
Makes no man atheist, and no woman whore;
Yet why should hallow'd vestal's sacred shrine
Deserve more honour than a flaming mine?
These pregnant wombs of heat would fitter be,
Than a few embers, for a deity.
Had he our pits, the Persian would admire
No sun, but warm's devotion at our fire:
He'd leave the trotting whipster, and prefer
Our profound Vulcan 'bove that wagoner.

For wants he heat, or light? or would have store
Of both? 'tis here: and what can suns give more?
Nay, what's the sun, but in a different name,
A coal-pit rampant, or a mine on flame!
Then let this truth reciprocally run,
The sun's heaven's coalery, and coals our sun.

Death, a voyage:

No family
E'er rigg'd a soul for heaven's discovery,
With whom more ventures might boldly dare
Venture their stakes, with him in joy to share. DONNE.

Their thoughts and expressions were sometimes grossly absurd, and such as no figures or license can reconcile to the understanding.

A lover neither dead nor alive:

Then down I laid my head,
Down on cold earth; and for awhile was dead,
And my freed soul to a strange somewhere fled;
Ah, sottish soul, said I,
When back to its cage again I saw it fly;
Fool to resume her broken chain,
And row her galley here again!
Fool, to that body to return
Where it condemn'd and destin'd is to burn!
Once dead, how can it be,
Death should a thing so pleasant seem to thee,
That thou should'st come to live it o'er again in me?

COWLEY.

A lover's heart, a hand grenado:

Wo to her stubborn heart, if once mine come
Into the self-same room;
'Twill tear and blow up all within,
Like a grenado shot into a magazin.
Then shall love keep the ashes and torn parts,
Of both our broken hearts;
Shall out of both one new one make;
From hers th' allay, from mine the metal take.

COWLEY.

To poetical propagation of light;

The prince's favour is diffus'd o'er all,
From which all fortunes, names, and natures fall:
Then from those wombs of stars, the bride's bright eyes,
At every glance a constellation flies,
And sowes the court with stars, and doth prevent,
In light and power, the all-ey'd firmament:
First her eye kindles other ladies' eyes,
Then from their beams their jewels' lustres rise:
And from their jewels torches do take fire,
And all is warmth, and light, and good desire. DONNE.

They were in very little care to clothe their notions with elegance of dress, and, therefore, miss the notice and the praise which are often gained by those who think less, but are more diligent to adorn their thoughts.

That a mistress beloved is fairer in idea than in reality, is, by Cowley, thus expressed:

Thou in my fancy dost much higher stand,
Than woman can be plac'd by nature's hand;
And I must needs, I'm sure, a loser be,
To change thee, as thou'rt there, for very thee.

That prayer and labour should cooperate, are thus taught by Donne:

In none but us are such mix'd engines found,
As hands of double office: for the ground
We till with them; and them to heaven we raise:
Who prayerless labours, or, without this, prays,
Doth but one half, that's none.

By the same author, a common topick, the danger of procrastination, is thus illustrated:

That which I should have begun
In my youth's morning, now late must be done;
And I, as giddy travellers must do,
Which stray or sleep all day, and, having lost
Light and strength, dark and tir'd must then ride post.

All that man has to do is to live and die; the sum of humanity is comprehended by Donne in the following lines:

> Think in how poor a prison thou didst lie;
> After enabled but to suck and cry.
> Think, when 'twas grown to most, 'twas a poor inn,
> A province pack'd up in two yards of skin,
> And that usurp'd, or threaten'd with a rage
> Of sicknesses, or their true mother, age.
> But think that death hath now enfranchis'd thee;
> Thou hast thy expansion now, and liberty;
> Think, that a rusty piece discharg'd is flown
> In pieces, and the bullet is his own,
> And freely flies: this to thy soul allow,
> Think thy shell broke, think thy soul hatch'd but now.

They were sometimes indelicate and disgusting. Cowley thus apostrophises beauty:

> Thou tyrant, which leav'st no man free!
> Thou subtle thief, from whom nought safe can be!
> Thou murderer, which hast kill'd; and devil, which woulds't
> damn me!

Thus he addresses his mistress:

> Thou who, in many a propriety,
> So truly art the sun to me,
> Add one more likeness, which I'm sure you can,
> And let me and my sun beget a man.

Thus he represents the meditations of a lover:

> Though in thy thoughts scarce any tracks have been
> So much as of original sin,
> Such charms thy beauty wears, as might
> Desires in dying confest saints excite.
> Thou with strange adultery
> Dost in each breast a brothel keep;
> Awake, all men do lust for thee,
> And some enjoy thee when they sleep.

The true taste of tears:

> Hither with crystal vials, lovers, come,
> And take my tears, which are love's wine,
> And try your mistress' tears at home;
> For all are false, that taste not just like mine. DONNE.

This is yet more indelicate:

> As the sweet sweat of roses in a still,
> As that which from chaf'd musk-cat's pores doth trill,
> As the almighty balm of th' early east;
> Such are the sweet drops of my mistress' breast.
> And on her neck her skin such lustre sets,
> They seem no sweat-drops, but pearl coronets:
> Rank, sweaty froth thy mistress' brow defiles. DONNE.

Their expressions sometimes raise horrour, when they intend, perhaps, to be pathetick:

> As men in hell are from diseases free,
> So from all other ills am I,
> Free from their known formality:
> But all pains eminently lie in thee. COWLEY.

They were not always strictly curious, whether the opinions from which they drew their illustrations were true; it was enough that they were popular. Bacon remarks, that some falsehoods are continued by tradition, because they supply commodious allusions.

> It gave a piteous groan, and so it broke:
> In vain it something would have spoke;
> The love within too strong for't was,
> Like poison put into a Venice-glass. COWLEY.

In forming descriptions, they looked out, not for images, but for conceits. Night has been a com-

mon subject, which poets have contended to adorn. Dryden's Night is well known; Donne's is as follows:

> Thou seest me here at midnight, now all rest:
> Time's dead low-water; when all minds divest
> To-morrow's business; when the labourers have
> Such rest in bed, that their last church-yard grave,
> Subject to change, will scarce be a type of this;
> Now when the client, whose last hearing is
> To-morrow, sleeps; when the condemned man,
> Who, when he opes his eyes, must shut them then
> Again by death, although sad watch he keep,
> Doth practise dying by a little sleep;
> Thou at this midnight seest me.

It must be, however, confessed of these writers, that if they are upon common subjects often unnecessarily and unpoetically subtile; yet, where scholastick speculation can be properly admitted, their copiousness and acuteness may justly be admired. What Cowley has written upon hope shows an unequalled fertility of invention:

> Hope, whose weak being ruin'd is,
> Alike if it succeed and if it miss;
> Whom good or ill does equally confound,
> And both the horns of fate's dilemma wound;
> Vain shadow! which dost vanish quite,
> Both at full noon and perfect night!
> The stars have not a possibility
> Of blessing thee;
> If things then from their end we happy call,
> 'Tis hope is the most hopeless thing of all.
> Hope, thou bold taster of delight,
> Who, whilst thou should'st but taste, devour'st it quite!
> Thou bring'st us an estate, yet leav'st us poor,
> By clogging it with legacies before!
> The joys which we entire should wed,
> Come deflower'd virgins to our bed;

Good fortunes without gain imported be,
  Such mighty custom's paid to thee;
For joy, like wine, kept close, does better taste;
If it take air before its spirits waste.

To the following comparison of a man that travels and his wife that stays at home, with a pair of compasses, it may be doubted whether absurdity or ingenuity has better claim:

Our two souls, therefore, which are one,
  Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
  Like gold to airy thinness beat.
If they be two, they are two so
  As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul, the fix'd foot, makes no show
  To move, but doth if th' other do.
And though it in the centre sit,
  Yet, when the other far doth roam,
It leans, and hearkens after it,
  And grows erect, as that comes home.
Such wilt thou be to me, who must
  Like th' other foot obliquely run,
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
  And makes me end where I begun. DONNE[w].

In all these examples it is apparent, that whatever is improper or vitious is produced by a voluntary deviation from nature, in pursuit of something new and strange; and that the writers fail to give delight by their desire of exciting admiration.

[w]It is but justice to the memory of Cowley, to quote here an exquisite stanza which Johnson has inserted in the Idler, No. 77, where he says; "Cowley seems to have possessed the power of writing easily beyond any other of our poets; yet his pursuit of remote thought led him often into harshness of expression." The stanza is to a lady elaborately dressed:

Th' adorning thee with so much art
  Is but a barb'rous skill,
'Tis like the pois'ning of a dart
  Too apt before to kill. ED.

Having thus endeavoured to exhibit a general representation of the style and sentiments of the metaphysical poets, it is now proper to examine, particularly, the works of Cowley, who was almost the last of that race, and undoubtedly the best.

His miscellanies contain a collection of short compositions, written some as they were dictated by a mind at leisure, and some as they were called forth by different occasions; with great variety of style and sentiment, from burlesque levity to awful grandeur. Such an assemblage of diversified excellence no other poet has hitherto afforded. To choose the best, among many good, is one of the most hazardous attempts of criticism. I know not whether Scaliger himself has persuaded many readers to join with him in his preference of the two favourite odes, which he estimates, in his raptures, at the value of a kingdom. I will, however, venture to recommend Cowley's first piece, which ought to be inscribed, To my Muse, for want of which the second couplet is without reference. When the title is added, there will still remain a defect; for every piece ought to contain, in itself, whatever is necessary to make it intelligible. Pope has some epitaphs without names; which are, therefore, epitaphs to be let, occupied, indeed, for the present, but hardly appropriated.

The ode on wit is almost without a rival. It was about the time of Cowley, that *wit*, which had been, till then, used for *intellection*, in contradistinction to *will*, took the meaning, whatever it be, which it now bears.

Of all the passages in which poets have exemplified their own precepts, none will easily be found of greater excellence than that in which Cowley condemns exuberance of wit:

> Yet 'tis not to adorn and gild each part,
> That shews more cost than art.
> Jewels at nose and lips but ill appear;
> Rather than all things wit, let none be there.
> Several lights will not be seen,
> If there be nothing else between.
> Men doubt, because they stand so thick i' th' sky,
> If those be stars which paint the galaxy.

In his verses to lord Falkland, whom every man of his time was proud to praise, there are, as there must be in all Cowley's compositions, some striking thoughts, but they are not well wrought. His elegy on sir Henry Wotton is vigorous and happy; the series of thoughts is easy and natural; and the conclusion, though a little weakened by the intrusion of Alexander, is elegant and forcible.

It may be remarked, that in this elegy, and in most of his encomiastick poems, he has forgotten or neglected to name his heroes.

In his poem on the death of Hervey, there is much praise, but little passion; a very just and ample delineation of such virtues as a studious privacy admits, and such intellectual excellence as a mind not yet called forth to action can display. He knew how to distinguish, and how to commend, the qualities of his companion; but, when he wishes to make us weep, he forgets to weep himself, and diverts his

sorrow by imagining how his crown of bays, if he had it, would crackle in the fire. It is the odd fate of this thought to be the worse for being true. The bay-leaf crackles remarkably as it burns; as, therefore, this property was not assigned it by chance, the mind must be thought sufficiently at ease that could attend to such minuteness of physiology. But the power of Cowley is not so much to move the affections, as to exercise the understanding.

The Chronicle is a composition unrivalled and alone: such gaiety of fancy, such facility of expression, such varied similitude, such a succession of images, and such a dance of words, it is in vain to expect, except from Cowley. His strength always appears in his agility; his volatility is not the flutter of a light, but the bound of an elastick mind. His levity never leaves his learning behind it; the moralist, the politician, and the critick, mingle their influence even in this airy frolick of genius. To such a performance Suckling could have brought the gaiety, but not the knowledge; Dryden could have supplied the knowledge, but not the gaiety.

The verses to Davenant, which are vigorously begun and happily concluded, contain some hints of criticism very justly conceived and happily expressed. Cowley's critical abilities have not been sufficiently observed: the few decisions and remarks, which his prefaces and his notes on the Davideis supply, were, at that time, accessions to English literature, and show such skill as raises our wish for more examples.

The lines from Jersey are a very curious and pleasing specimen of the familiar descending to the burlesque.

His two metrical disquisitions *for* and *against* reason are no mean specimens of metaphysical poetry. The stanzas against knowledge produce little conviction. In those which are intended to exalt the human faculties, reason has its proper task assigned it; that of judging, not of things revealed, but of the reality of revelation. In the verses for reason, is a passage which Bentley, in the only English verses which he is known to have written, seems to have copied, though with the inferiority of an imitator.

> The holy book like the eighth sphere doth shine
> With thousand lights of truth divine,
> So numberless the stars, that to our eye
> It makes all but one galaxy.
> Yet reason must assist too; for, in seas
> So vast and dangerous as these,
> Our course by stars above we cannot know
> Without the compass too below.

After this, says Bentley[x]:

> Who travels in religious jars,
> Truth mix'd with error, shade with rays,
> Like Whiston wanting pyx or stars,
> In ocean wide or sinks or strays.

Cowley seems to have had what Milton is believed to have wanted, the skill to rate his own performances by their just value, and has, therefore, closed his miscellanies with the verses upon Crashaw,

[x] Dodsley's Collection of Poems, vol. v. R.

which apparently excel all that have gone before them, and in which there are beauties which common authors may justly think not only above their attainment, but above their ambition.

To the miscellanies succeed the Anacreontiques, or paraphrastical translations of some little poems, which pass, however justly, under the name of Anacreon. Of these songs dedicated to festivity and gaiety, in which even the morality is voluptuous, and which teach nothing but the enjoyment of the present day, he has given rather a pleasing, than a faithful representation, having retained their sprightliness, but lost their simplicity. The Anacreon of Cowley, like the Homer of Pope, has admitted the decoration of some modern graces, by which he is undoubtedly more amiable to common readers, and, perhaps, if they would honestly declare their own perceptions, to far the greater part of those whom courtesy and ignorance are content to style the learned.

These little pieces will be found more finished in their kind than any other of Cowley's works. The diction shows nothing of the mould of time, and the sentiments are at no great distance from our present habitudes of thought. Real mirth must be always natural, and nature is uniform. Men have been wise in very different modes; but they have always laughed the same way.

Levity of thought naturally produced familiarity of language, and the familiar part of language continues long the same; the dialogue of comedy, when

it is transcribed from popular manners, and real life, is read, from age to age, with equal pleasure. The artifices of inversion, by which the established order of words is changed, or of innovation, by which new words, or meanings of words, are introduced, is practised, not by those who talk to be understood, but by those who write to be admired.

The Anacreontiques, therefore, of Cowley, give now all the pleasure which they ever gave. If he was formed by nature for one kind of writing more than for another, his power seems to have been greatest in the familiar and the festive.

The next class of his poems is called the Mistress, of which it is not necessary to select any particular pieces for praise or censure. They have all the same beauties and faults, and nearly in the same proportion. They are written with exuberance of wit, and with copiousness of learning; and it is truly asserted by Sprat, that the plenitude of the writer's knowledge flows in upon his page, so that the reader is commonly surprised into some improvement. But, considered as the verses of a lover, no man that has ever loved will much commend them. They are neither courtly nor pathetick, have neither gallantry nor fondness. His praises are too far-sought, and too hyperbolical, either to express love, or to excite it; every stanza is crowded with darts and flames, with wounds and death, with mingled souls, and with broken hearts.

The principal artifice by which the Mistress is filled with conceits, is very copiously displayed by

Addison. Love is by Cowley, as by other poets, expressed metaphorically by flame and fire; and that which is true of real fire is said of love, or figurative fire, the same word in the same sentence retaining both significations. Thus, "observing the cold regard of his mistress's eyes, and, at the same time, their power of producing love in him, he considers them as burning-glasses made of ice. Finding himself able to live in the greatest extremities of love, he concludes the torrid zone to be habitable. Upon the dying of a tree on which he had cut his loves, he observes that his flames had burnt up and withered the tree."

These conceits Addison calls mixed wit; that is, wit which consists of thoughts true in one sense of the expression, and false in the other. Addison's representation is sufficiently indulgent: that confusion of images may entertain for a moment; but, being unnatural, it soon grows wearisome. Cowley delighted in it, as much as if he had invented it; but, not to mention the ancients, he might have found it full-blown in modern Italy. Thus Sannazaro:

> Aspice quam variis distringar, Lesbia, curis!
> Uror, et heu! nostro manat ab igne liquor:
> Sum Nilus, sumque Ætna simul; restringite flammas
> O lacrimæ, aut lacrimas ebibe, flamma, meas.

One of the severe theologians of that time censured him, as having published "a book of profane and lascivious verses." From the charge of profaneness, the constant tenour of his life, which seems to

have been eminently virtuous, and the general tendency of his opinions, which discover no irreverence of religion, must defend him; but that the accusation of lasciviousness is unjust, the perusal of his work will sufficiently evince.

Cowley's Mistress has no power of seduction: she "plays round the head, but reaches not the heart." Her beauty and absence, her kindness and cruelty, her disdain and inconstancy, produce no correspondence of emotion. His poetical account of the virtues of plants, and colours of flowers, is not perused with more sluggish frigidity. The compositions are such as might have been written for penance by a hermit, or for hire by a philosophical rhymer, who had only heard of another sex; for they turn the mind only on the writer, whom, without thinking on a woman but as the subject for his task, we sometimes esteem as learned, and sometimes despise as trifling, always admire as ingenious, and always condemn as unnatural.

The Pindarique odes are now to be considered; a species of composition, which Cowley thinks Pancirolus might have counted in "his list of the lost inventions of antiquity," and which he has made a bold and vigorous attempt to recover.

The purpose with which he has paraphrased an Olympick and Nemæan ode, is, by himself, sufficiently explained. His endeavour was, not to show "precisely what Pindar spoke, but his manner of speaking." He was, therefore, not at all restrained to his expressions, nor much to his sentiments;

nothing was required of him, but not to write as Pindar would not have written.

Of the Olympick ode, the beginning is, I think, above the original in elegance, and the conclusion below it in strength. The connexion is supplied with great perspicuity; and the thoughts, which, to a reader of less skill, seem thrown together by chance, are concatenated without any abruption. Though the English ode cannot be called a translation, it may be very properly consulted as a commentary.

The spirit of Pindar is, indeed, not every where equally preserved. The following pretty lines are not such as his *deep mouth* was used to pour:

> Great Rhea's son,
> If in Olympus' top, where thou
> Sitt'st to behold thy sacred show,
> If in Alpheus' silver flight,
> If in my verse thou take delight,
> My verse, great Rhea's son, which is
> Lofty as that, and smooth as this.

In the Nemæan ode the reader must, in mere justice to Pindar, observe, that whatever is said of "the original new moon, her tender forehead, and her horns," is superadded by his paraphrast, who has many other plays of words and fancy unsuitable to the original, as

> The table, free for ev'ry guest,
> No doubt will thee admit,
> And feast more upon thee, than thou on it.

He sometimes extends his author's thoughts without improving them. In the Olympionick an oath is mentioned in a single word, and Cowley

spends three lines in swearing by the Castalian stream. We are told of Theron's bounty, with a hint that he had enemies, which Cowley thus enlarges in rhyming prose:

> But in this thankless world the giver
> Is envied even by the receiver;
> 'Tis now the cheap and frugal fashion
> Rather to hide than own the obligation:
> Nay, 'tis much worse than so;
> It now an artifice does grow
> Wrongs and injuries to do,
> Lest men should think we owe.

It is hard to conceive that a man of the first rank in learning and wit, when he was dealing out such minute morality in such feeble diction, could imagine, either waking or dreaming, that he imitated Pindar.

In the following odes, where Cowley chooses his own subjects, he sometimes rises to dignity truly Pindarick; and, if some deficiencies of language be forgiven, his strains are such as those of the Theban bard were to his contemporaries:

> Begin the song, and strike the living lyre:
> Lo, how the years to come, a numerous and well-fitted quire,
> All hand in hand do decently advance,
> And to my song with smooth and equal measure dance;
> While the dance lasts, how long soe'er it be,
> My musick's voice shall bear it company;
> Till all gentle notes be drown'd
> In the last trumpet's dreadful sound.

After such enthusiasm, who will not lament to find the poet conclude with lines like these:

> But stop, my muse—
> Hold thy Pindarick Pegasus closely in,
> Which does to rage begin—

—'Tis an unruly and a hard-mouth'd horse—
'Twill no unskilful touch endure,
But flings writer and reader too that sits not sure.

The fault of Cowley, and, perhaps, of all the writers of the metaphysical race, is that of pursuing his thoughts to the last ramifications, by which he loses the grandeur of generality; for of the greatest things the parts are little; what is little can be but pretty, and, by claiming dignity, becomes ridiculous. Thus all the power of description is destroyed by a scrupulous enumeration, and the force of metaphors is lost, when the mind, by the mention of particulars, is turned more upon the original than the secondary sense, more upon that from which the illustration is drawn, than that to which it is applied.

Of this we have a very eminent example in the ode entitled the Muse, who goes to "take the air" in an intellectual chariot, to which he harnesses fancy and judgment, wit and eloquence, memory and invention: how he distinguished wit from fancy, or how memory could properly contribute to motion, he has not explained; we are, however, content to suppose that he could have justified his own fiction, and wish to see the muse begin her career; but there is yet more to be done:

Let the *postillion*, nature, mount, and let
The *coachman* art be set;
And let the airy *footman*, running all beside,
Make a long row of goodly pride;
Figures, conceits, raptures, and sentences,
In a well-worded dress,
And innocent loves, and pleasant truths, and useful lies,
In all their gaudy *liveries*.

Every mind is now disgusted with this cumber of magnificence; yet I cannot refuse myself the four next lines:

> Mount, glorious queen, thy travelling throne,
> And bid it to put on;
> For long, though cheerful, is the way,
> And life, alas! allows but one ill winter's day.

In the same ode, celebrating the power of the muse, he gives her prescience, or, in poetical language, the foresight of events hatching in futurity; but, having once an egg in his mind, he cannot forbear to show us that he knows what an egg contains:

> Thou into the close nests of time dost peep,
> And there with piercing eye
> Through the firm shell and the thick white dost spy
> Years to come a-forming lie,
> Close in their sacred fecundine asleep.

The same thought is more generally, and, therefore, more poetically expressed by Casimir, a writer who has many of the beauties and faults of Cowley:

> Omnibus mundi dominator horis
> Aptat urgendas per inane pennas,
> Pars adhuc nido latet, et futuros
> Crescit in annos.

Cowley, whatever was his subject, seems to have been carried, by a kind of destiny, to the light and the familiar, or to conceits which require still more ignoble epithets. A slaughter in the Red sea "new dies the water's name;" and England, during the civil war, was "Albion no more, nor to be named from white." It is, surely, by some fascination not easily surmounted, that a writer professing to revive

"the noblest and highest writing in verse," makes this address to the new year:

> Nay, if thou lov'st me, gentle year,
> Let not so much as love be there,
> Vain, fruitless love I mean; for, gentle year,
> Although I fear
> There's of this caution little need,
> Yet, gentle year, take heed
> How thou dost make
> Such a mistake;
> Such love I mean alone
> As by thy cruel predecessors has been shewn:
> For, though I have too much cause to doubt it,
> I fain would try, for once, if life can live without it.

The reader of this will be inclined to cry out, with Prior,

> Ye criticks, say,
> How poor to this was Pindar's style!

Even those who cannot, perhaps, find in the Isthmian or Nemæan songs what antiquity has disposed them to expect, will, at least, see that they are ill represented by such puny poetry; and all will determine, that if this be the old Theban strain, it is not worthy of revival.

To the disproportion and incongruity of Cowley's sentiments, must be added the uncertainty and looseness of his measures. He takes the liberty of using, in any place, a verse of any length, from two syllables to twelve. The verses of Pindar have, as he observes, very little harmony to a modern ear; yet, by examining the syllables, we perceive them to be regular, and have reason enough for supposing that the ancient audiences were delighted with the sound. The imitator ought, therefore, to have adopted what

he found, and to have added what was wanting; to have preserved a constant return of the same numbers, and to have supplied smoothness of transition and continuity of thought.

It is urged by Dr. Sprat, that the "irregularity of numbers is the very thing" which makes "that kind of poesy fit for all manner of subjects." But he should have remembered, that what is fit for every thing can fit nothing well. The great pleasure of verse arises from the known measure of the lines, and uniform structure of the stanzas, by which the voice is regulated, and the memory relieved.

If the Pindarick style be, what Cowley thinks it, "the highest and noblest kind of writing in verse," it can be adapted only to high and noble subjects; and it will not be easy to reconcile the poet with the critick, or to conceive how that can be the highest kind of writing in verse, which, according to Sprat, is "chiefly to be preferred for its near affinity to prose."

This lax and lawless versification so much concealed the deficiencies of the barren, and flattered the laziness of the idle, that it immediately overspread our books of poetry; all the boys and girls caught the pleasing fashion, and they that could do nothing else could write like Pindar. The rights of antiquity were invaded, and disorder tried to break into the Latin: a poem[y] on the Sheldonian

[y] First published in quarto, 1669, under the title of Carmen Pindaricum in Theatrum Sheldonianum in solemnibus magnifici operis encæniis. Recitatum Julii die 9, anno 1669, a Corbetto Owen, A. B. Æd. Chr. Alumno, authore. R.

theatre, in which all kinds of verse are shaken together, is unhappily inserted in the Musæ Anglicanæ. Pindarism prevailed about half a century; but, at last, died gradually away, and other imitations supply its place.

The Pindarick odes have so long enjoyed the highest degree of poetical reputation, that I am not willing to dismiss them with unabated censure; and, surely, though the mode of their composition be erroneous, yet many parts deserve, at least, that admiration which is due to great comprehension of knowledge, and great fertility of fancy. The thoughts are often new, and often striking; but the greatness of one part is disgraced by the littleness of another; and total negligence of language gives the noblest conceptions the appearance of a fabrick, august in the plan, but mean in the materials. Yet, surely, those verses are not without a just claim to praise; of which it may be said with truth, that no man but Cowley could have written them.

The Davideis now remains to be considered; a poem which the author designed to have extended to twelve books, merely, as he makes no scruple of declaring, because the Æneid had that number; but he had leisure or perseverance only to write the third part. Epick poems have been left unfinished by Virgil, Statius, Spenser, and Cowley. That we have not the whole Davideis, is, however, not much to be regretted; for in this undertaking Cowley is, tacitly, at least, confessed to have miscarried. There are not many examples of so great a work, produced by an

author generally read, and generally praised, that has crept through a century with so little regard. Whatever is said of Cowley, is meant of his other works. Of the Davideis no mention is made; it never appears in books, nor emerges in conversation. By the Spectator it has been once quoted; by Rymer it has once been praised; and by Dryden, in Mac Flecknoe, it has once been imitated; nor do I recollect much other notice from its publication till now, in the whole succession of English literature.

Of this silence and neglect, if the reason be inquired, it will be found partly in the choice of the subject, and partly in the performance of the work.

Sacred history has been always read with submissive reverence, and an imagination overawed and controlled. We have been accustomed to acquiesce in the nakedness and simplicity of the authentick narrative, and to repose on its veracity with such humble confidence as suppresses curiosity. We go with the historian as he goes, and stop with him when he stops. All amplification is frivolous and vain; all addition to that which is already sufficient for the purposes of religion seems not only useless, but, in some degree, profane.

Such events as were produced by the visible interposition of divine power are above the power of human genius to dignify. The miracle of creation, however it may teem with images, is best described with little diffusion of language: "He spake the word, and they were made."

We are told, that Saul "was troubled with an

evil spirit;" from this Cowley takes an opportunity of describing hell, and telling the history of Lucifer, who was, he says,

> Once gen'ral of a gilded host of sprites,
> Like Hesper leading forth the spangled nights;
> But down, like lightning which him struck, he came,
> And roar'd at his first plunge into the flame.

Lucifer makes a speech to the inferiour agents of mischief, in which there is something of heathenism, and, therefore, of impropriety; and, to give efficacy to his words, concludes by lashing "his breast with his long tail." Envy, after a pause, steps out, and, among other declarations of her zeal, utters these lines:

> Do thou but threat, loud storms shall make reply,
> And thunder echo to the trembling sky:
> Whilst raging seas swell to so bold an height,
> As shall the fire's proud element affright.
> Th' old drudging sun, from his long-beaten way,
> Shall, at thy voice, start, and misguide the day.
> The jocund orbs shall break their measur'd pace,
> And stubborn poles change their allotted place,
> Heaven's gilded troops shall flutter here and there,
> Leaving their boasting songs tun'd to a sphere.

Every reader feels himself weary with this useless talk of an allegorical being.

It is not only when the events are confessedly miraculous, that fancy and fiction lose their effect: the whole system of life, while the theocracy was yet visible, has an appearance so different from all other scenes of human action, that the reader of the sacred volume habitually considers it as the peculiar mode of existence of a distinct species of mankind,

that lived and acted with manners uncommunicable; so that it is difficult, even for imagination, to place us in the state of them whose story is related, and, by consequence, their joys and griefs are not easily adopted, nor can the attention be often interested in any thing that befalls them.

To the subject thus originally indisposed to the reception of poetical embellishments, the writer brought little that could reconcile impatience, or attract curiosity. Nothing can be more disgusting than a narrative spangled with conceits; and conceits are all that the Davideis supplies.

One of the great sources of poetical delight, is description, or the power of presenting pictures to the mind. Cowley gives inferences instead of images, and shows not what may be supposed to have been seen, but what thoughts the sight might have suggested. When Virgil describes the stone which Turnus lifted against Æneas, he fixes the attention on its bulk and weight:

> Saxum circumspicit ingens,
> Saxum antiquum, ingens, campo quod forte jacebat,
> Limes agro positus, litem ut discerneret arvis.

Cowley says of the stone with which Cain slew his brother,

> I saw him fling the stone, as if he meant
> At once his murther and his monument.

Of the sword taken from Goliah, he says,

> A sword so great, that it was only fit,
> To cut off his great head that came with it.

Other poets describe death by some of its common appearances. Cowley says, with a learned allusion to sepulchral lamps, real or fabulous,

> 'Twixt his right ribs deep pierc'd the furious blade,
> And open'd wide those secret vessels where
> Life's light goes out, when first they let in air.

But he has allusions vulgar, as well as learned. In a visionary succession of kings:

> Joas at first does bright and glorious shew,
> In life's fresh morn his fame does early crow.

Describing an undisciplined army, after having said with elegance,

> His forces seem'd no army, but a crowd
> Heartless, unarm'd, disorderly, and loud,

he gives them a fit of the ague.

The allusions, however, are not always to vulgar things; he offends by exaggeration, as much as by diminution:

> The king was plac'd alone, and o'er his head
> A well-wrought heaven of silk and gold was spread.

Whatever he writes is always polluted with some conceit:

> Where the sun's fruitful beams give metals birth,
> Where he the growth of fatal gold doth see,
> Gold, which alone more influence has than he.

In one passage he starts a sudden question, to the confusion of philosophy:

> Ye learned heads, whom ivy garlands grace,
> Why does that twining plant the oak embrace;
> The oak, for courtship most of all unfit,
> And rough as are the winds that fight with it?

His expressions have, sometimes, a degree of meanness that surpasses expectation:

> Nay, gentle guests, he cries, since now you're in,
> The story of your gallant friend begin.

In a simile descriptive of the morning:

> As glimm'ring stars just at th' approach of day,
> Cashier'd by troops, at last drop all away.

The dress of Gabriel deserves attention:

> He took for skin a cloud most soft and bright,
> That e'er the mid-day sun pierc'd through with light;
> Upon his cheeks a lively blush he spread,
> Wash'd from the morning beauties' deepest red;
> An harmless flatt'ring meteor shone for hair,
> And fell adown his shoulders with loose care;
> He cuts out a silk mantle from the skies,
> Where the most sprightly azure pleas'd the eyes;
> This he with starry vapours sprinkles all,
> Took in their prime ere they grow ripe and fall;
> Of a new rainbow, ere it fret or fade,
> The choicest piece cut out, a scarf is made.

This is just a specimen of Cowley's imagery: what might, in general expressions, be great and forcible, he weakens and makes ridiculous by branching it into small parts. That Gabriel was invested with the softest or brightest colours of the sky, we might have been told, and been dismissed to improve the idea in our different proportions of conception; but Cowley could not let us go, till he had related where Gabriel got first his skin, and then his mantle, then his lace, and then his scarf, and related it in the terms of the mercer and tailor.

Sometimes he indulges himself in a digression, always conceived with his natural exuberance, and

commonly, even where it is not long, continued till it is tedious.

> I' th' library a few choice authors stood,
> Yet 'twas well stor'd, for that small store was good;
> Writing, man's spiritual physick, was not then
> Itself, as now, grown a disease of men.
> Learning (young virgin) but few suitors knew;
> The common prostitute she lately grew,
> And with the spurious brood loads now the press;
> Laborious effects of idleness.

As the Davideis affords only four books, though intended to consist of twelve, there is no opportunity for such criticism as epick poems commonly supply. The plan of the whole work is very imperfectly shown by the third part. The duration of an unfinished action cannot be known. Of characters, either not yet introduced, or shown but upon few occasions, the full extent and the nice discriminations cannot be ascertained. The fable is plainly implex, formed rather from the Odyssey than the Iliad; and many artifices of diversification are employed, with the skill of a man acquainted with the best models. The past is recalled by narration, and the future anticipated by vision: but he has been so lavish of his poetical art, that it is difficult to imagine how he could fill eight books more without practising again the same modes of disposing his matter; and, perhaps, the perception of this growing incumbrance inclined him to stop. By this abruption posterity lost more instruction than delight. If the continuation of the Davideis can be missed, it is for the learning that had been diffused over it, and the notes in which it had been explained.

Had not his characters been depraved, like every other part, by improper decorations, they would have deserved uncommon praise. He gives Saul both the body and mind of a hero:

> His way once chose, he forward thrust outright,
> Nor turn'd aside for danger or delight.

And the different beauties of the lofty Merah and the gentle Michol, are very justly conceived and strongly painted.

Rymer has declared the Davideis superiour to the Jerusalem of Tasso; "which," says he, "the poet, with all his care, has not totally purged from pedantry." If by pedantry is meant that minute knowledge which is derived from particular sciences and studies, in opposition to the general notions supplied by a wide survey of life and nature, Cowley certainly errs, by introducing pedantry far more frequently than Tasso. I know not, indeed, why they should be compared; for the resemblance of Cowley's work to Tasso's is only that they both exhibit the agency of celestial and infernal spirits, in which, however, they differ widely; for Cowley supposes them commonly to operate upon the mind by suggestion; Tasso represents them as promoting or obstructing events by external agency.

Of particular passages that can be properly compared, I remember only the description of heaven, in which the different manner of the two writers is sufficiently discernible. Cowley's is scarcely description, unless it be possible to describe by negatives: for he tells us only what there is not in heaven. Tasso

endeavours to represent the splendours and pleasures of the regions of happiness. Tasso affords images, and Cowley sentiments. It happens, however, that Tasso's description affords some reason for Rymer's censure. He says of the supreme being,

> Ha sotto i piedi e fato e la natura,
> Ministri umili, e 'l moto, e chi'l misura.

The second line has in it more of pedantry than, perhaps, can be found in any other stanza of the poem.

In the perusal of the Davideis, as of all Cowley's works, we find wit and learning unprofitably squandered. Attention has no relief; the affections are never moved: we are sometimes surprised, but never delighted; and find much to admire, but little to approve. Still, however, it is the work of Cowley; of a mind capacious by nature, and replenished by study.

In the general review of Cowley's poetry it will be found, that he wrote with abundant fertility, but negligent or unskilful selection; with much thought, but with little imagery; that he is never pathetick, and rarely sublime; but always either ingenious or learned, either acute or profound.

It is said by Denham, in his elegy,

> To him no author was unknown,
> Yet what he writ was all his own.

This wide position requires less limitation, when it is affirmed of Cowley, than, perhaps, of any other poet.—He read much, and yet borrowed little.

His character of writing was, indeed, not his own: he unhappily adopted that which was predominant. He saw a certain way to present praise; and, not sufficiently inquiring by what means the ancients have continued to delight through all the changes of human manners, he contented himself with a deciduous laurel, of which the verdure, in its spring, was bright and gay, but which time has been continually stealing from his brows.

He was, in his own time, considered as of unrivalled excellence. Clarendon represents him as having taken a flight beyond all that went before him; and Milton is said to have declared, that the three greatest English poets were Spenser, Shakespeare, and Cowley.

His manner he had in common with others; but his sentiments were his own. Upon every subject he thought for himself; and such was his copiousness of knowledge, that something at once remote and applicable rushed into his mind; yet it is not likely that he always rejected a commodious idea merely because another had used it: his known wealth was so great, that he might have borrowed without loss of credit.

In his elegy on sir Henry Wotton, the last lines have such resemblance to the noble epigram of Grotius on the death of Scaliger, that I cannot but think them copied from it, though they are copied by no servile hand.

One passage in his Mistress is so apparently borrowed from Donne, that he probably would not

have written it, had it not mingled with his own thoughts, so as that he did not perceive himself taking it from another:

> Although I think thou never found wilt be,
> Yet I'm resolv'd to search for thee:
> The search itself rewards the pains.
> So, though the chymic his great secret miss
> (For neither it in art or nature is,)
> Yet things well worth his toil he gains;
> And does his charge and labour pay
> With good unsought experiments by the way. COWLEY.
>
> Some that have déeper digg'd love's mine than I,
> Say, where his centric happiness doth lie:
> I have lov'd, and got, and told;
> But should I love, get, tell, till I were old;
> I should not find that hidden mystery;
> Oh, 'tis imposture all!
> And as no chymic yet th' elixir got,
> But glorifies his pregnant pot,
> If by the way to him befall
> Some odoriferous thing, or medicinal,
> So lovers dream a rich and long delight,
> But get a winter-seeming summer's night. DONNE.

Jonson and Donne, as Dr. Hurd remarks, were then in the highest esteem.

It is related by Clarendon, that Cowley always acknowledges his obligation to the learning and industry of Jonson; but I have found no traces of Jonson in his works: to emulate Donne appears to have been his purpose; and from Donne he may have learned that familiarity with religious images, and that light allusion to sacred things, by which readers far short of sanctity are frequently offended; and which would not be borne, in the present age, when devotion, perhaps, not more fervent, is more delicate.

Having produced one passage taken by Cowley from Donne, I will recompense him by another which Milton seems to have borrowed from him. He says of Goliah:

> His spear, the trunk was of a lofty tree,
> Which nature meant some tall ship's mast should be.

Milton of Satan:

> His spear, to equal which the tallest pine
> Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
> Of some great admiral, were but a wand,
> He walked with.

His diction was, in his own time, censured as negligent. He seems not to have known, or not to have considered, that words, being arbitrary, must owe their power to association, and have the influence, and that only, which custom has given them. Language is the dress of thought: and, as the noblest, mien, or most graceful action, would be degraded and obscured by a garb appropriated to the gross employments of rusticks or mechanicks; so the most heroick sentiments will lose their efficacy, and the most splendid ideas drop their magnificence, if they are conveyed by words used commonly upon low and trivial occasions, debased by vulgar mouths, and contaminated by inelegant applications.

Truth, indeed, is always truth, and reason is always reason; they have an intrinsick and unalterable value, and constitute that intellectual gold which defies destruction; but gold may be so concealed in baser matter, that only a chymist can recover it; sense may be so hidden in unrefined and

plebeian words, that none but philosophers can distinguish it; and both may be so buried in impurities, as not to pay the cost of their extraction.

The diction, being the vehicle of the thoughts, first presents itself to the intellectual eye; and, if the first appearance offends, a further knowledge is not often sought. Whatever professes to benefit by pleasing, must please at once. The pleasures of the mind imply something sudden and unexpected; that which elevates must always surprise. What is perceived by slow degrees may gratify us with the consciousness of improvement, but will never strike with the sense of pleasure.

Of all this, Cowley appears to have been without knowledge, or without care. He makes no selection of words, nor seeks any neatness of phrase: he has no elegancies, either lucky or elaborate: as his endeavours were rather to impress sentences upon the understanding than images on the fancy, he has few epithets, and those scattered without peculiar propriety or nice adaptation. It seems to follow from the necessity of the subject, rather than the care of the writer, that the diction of his heroick poem is less familiar than that of his slightest writings. He has given not the same numbers, but the same diction, to the gentle Anacreon and the tempestuous Pindar.

His versification seems to have had very little of his care; and, if what he thinks be true, that his numbers are unmusical only when they are ill read, the art of reading them is at present lost; for they

are commonly harsh to modern ears. He has, indeed, many noble lines, such as the feeble care of Waller never could produce. The bulk of his thoughts sometimes swelled his verse to unexpected and inevitable grandeur; but his excellence of this kind is merely fortuitous: he sinks willingly down to his general carelessness, and avoids, with very little care, either meanness or asperity.

His contractions are often rugged and harsh:

> One flings a mountain, and its rivers too
> Torn up with 't.

His rhymes are very often made by pronouns, or particles, or the like unimportant words, which disappoint the ear, and destroy the energy of the line.

His combination of different measures is, sometimes, dissonant and unpleasing; he joins verses together, of which the former does not slide easily into the latter.

The words *do* and *did*, which so much degrade, in present estimation, the line that admits them, were, in the time of Cowley, little censured or avoided; how often he used them, and with how bad an effect, at least to our ears, will appear by a passage, in which every reader will lament to see just and noble thoughts defrauded of their praise by inelegance of language:

> Where honour or where conscience *does* not bind,
> No other law shall shackle me;
> Slave to myself I ne'er will be;
> Nor shall my future actions be confin'd
> By my own present mind.
> Who by resolves and vows engag'd *does* stand
> For days, that yet belong to fate,

Does, like an unthrift, mortgage his estate,
Before it falls into his hand;
The bondman of the cloister so,
All that he *does* receive *does* always owe:
And still, as time comes in, it goes away,
Not to enjoy, but debts to pay!
Unhappy slave, and pupil to a bell,
Which his hour's work, as well as hours, *does* tell!
Unhappy till the last, the kind releasing knell.

His heroick lines are often formed of monosyllables; but yet they are sometimes sweet and sonorous. He says of the Messiah:

Round the whole earth his dreaded name shall sound,
And reach to worlds that must not yet be found.

In another place, of David:

Yet bid him go securely, when he sends;
'Tis Saul that is his foe, and we his friends.
The man who has his God, no aid can lack;
And we who bid him go, will bring him back.

Yet, amidst his negligence, he sometimes attempted an improved and scientifick versification; of which it will be best to give his own account subjoined to this line:

Nor can the glory contain itself in th' endless space.

"I am sorry that it is necessary to admonish the most part of readers, that it is not by negligence that this verse is so loose, long, and, as it were, vast; it is to paint in the number the nature of the thing which it describes, which I would have observed in divers other places of this poem, that else will pass for very careless verses: as before,

And overruns the neighb'ring fields with violent course.

"In the second book,

Down a precipice deep, down he casts them all.

"And,

And fell a-down his shoulders with loose care.

"In the third,

Brass was his helmet, his boots brass, and o'er
His breast a thick plate of strong brass he wore.

"In the fourth,

Like some fair pine o'erlooking all th' ignobler wood.

"And,

Some from the rocks cast themselves down headlong.

"And many more: but it is enough to instance in a few. The thing is, that the disposition of words and numbers should be such, as that, out of the order and sound of them, the things themselves may be represented. This the Greeks were not so accurate as to bind themselves to; neither have our English poets observed it, for aught I can find. The Latins (qui musas colunt severiores) sometimes did it; and their prince, Virgil, always, in whom the examples are innumerable, and taken notice of by all judicious men, so that it is superfluous to collect them."

I know not whether he has, in many of these instances, attained the representation or resemblance that he purposes. Verse can imitate only sound and motion. A *boundless* verse, a *headlong* verse, and a verse of *brass*, or of *strong brass*, seem to comprise very incongruous and unsociable ideas. What there

is peculiar in the sound of the line expressing *loose care*, I cannot discover; nor why the *pine* is *taller* in an alexandrine than in ten syllables.

But, not to defraud him of his due praise, he has given one example of representative versification, which, perhaps, no other English line can equal:

> Begin, be bold, and venture to be wise:
> He, who defers this work from day to day,
> Does on a river's bank expecting stay
> Till the whole stream that stopp'd him shall be gone,
> *Which runs, and, as it runs, for ever shall run on.*

Cowley was, I believe, the first poet that mingled alexandrines, at pleasure, with the common heroick of ten syllables; and from him Dryden borrowed the practice, whether ornamental or licentious. He considered the verse of twelve syllables as elevated and majestick, and has, therefore, deviated into that measure, when he supposes the voice heard of the supreme being.

The author of the Davideis is commended by Dryden for having written it in couplets, because he discovered that any staff was too lyrical for an heroick poem; but this seems to have been known before by May and Sandys, the translators of the Pharsalia and the Metamorphoses.

In the Davideis are some hemistichs, or verses left imperfect by the author, in imitation of Virgil, whom he supposes not to have intended to complete them: that this opinion is erroneous, may be probably concluded, because this truncation is imitated by no subsequent Roman poet; because Virgil himself filled up one broken line in the heat of rec-

itation; because in one the sense is now unfinished; and because all that can be done by a broken verse, a line intersected by a *cæsura* and a full stop, will equally effect.

Of triplets, in his Davideis, he makes no use, and, perhaps, did not, at first, think them allowable; but he appears afterwards to have changed his mind, for, in the verses on the government of Cromwell, he inserts them liberally with great happiness.

After so much criticism on his poems, the essays which accompany them must not be forgotten. What is said by Sprat of his conversation, that no man could draw from it any suspicion of his excellence in poetry, may be applied to these compositions. No author ever kept his verse and his prose at a greater distance from each other. His thoughts are natural, and his style has a smooth and placid equability, which has never yet obtained its due commendation. Nothing is far-sought, or hard-laboured; but all is easy without feebleness, and familiar without grossness.

It has been observed by Felton, in his essay on the Classicks, that Cowley was beloved by every muse that he courted; and that he has rivalled the ancients in every kind of poetry but tragedy.

It may be affirmed, without any encomiastick fervour, that he brought to his poetick labours a mind replete with learning, and that his pages are embellished with all the ornaments which books could supply; that he was the first who imparted to English numbers the enthusiasm of the greater ode,

and the gaiety of the less; that he was equally qualified for sprightly sallies, and for lofty flights; that he was among those who freed translation from servility, and, instead of following his author at a distance, walked by his side; and that if he left versification yet improvable, he left likewise, from time to time, such specimens of excellence as enabled succeeding poets to improve it.

The insertion of Cowley's epitaph may be interesting to our readers.

Epitaphium
Autoris
In Ecclesia D. Petri apud Westmonasterienses
Sepulti.
Abrahamus Cowleius,
Anglorum Pindarus, Flaccus, Maro,
Deliciæ, Decus, Desiderium, Ævi sui,
Hic juxta situs est.

Aurea dum volitant late tua scripta per orbem,
Et fama æternum vivis, divine poeta,
Hic placida jaceas requie: custodiat urnam
Cana fides, vigilentque perenni lampade musæ
Sit sacer iste locus; nec quis temerarius ausit
Sacrilega turbare manu venerabile bustum.
Intacti maneant; maneant per sæcula dulces
Cowleii cineres, serventque immobile saxum.

Sic vovatque
Votumque suum apud posteros sacratum esse voluit
Qui viro incomparabili posuit sepulchrale marmor,
Georgius Dux Buckinghamiæ.

Excessit e vita Anno Ætatis suæ 49° et honorifica pompa elatus ex Ædibus Buckinghamianis, viris illustribus omnium ordinum exequias celebrantibus, sepultus est die 3° M, Augusti, Anno Domini 1667.

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